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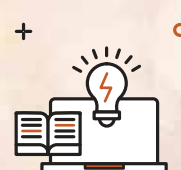
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# SOCIAL ISSUES

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# 1. WOMEN

## 1.1. SURROGACY IN INDIA

### Why in the News?

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare notifies Surrogacy (Regulation) Amendment Rules, 2024.

### About Surrogacy (Regulation) Amendment Rules, 2024

- In the exercise of powers conferred under **Surrogacy (Regulation) Act 2021**, the Government makes the following rules to **amend the Surrogacy (Regulation) Rules, 2022**.
  - In case when **District Medical Board certifies** that the intending couple suffers from a medical condition necessitating the use of a donor gamete, then surrogacy using a donor gamete is allowed provided that the **child to be born through surrogacy must have at least one gamete from the intending couple**.
    - ✓ Previously, **Rule 7 of Surrogacy (Regulation) Rules, 2022** prohibited the use of donor gametes.
  - **Single women** (widow or divorcee) undergoing surrogacy **must use self-eggs and donor sperms** to avail surrogacy procedure.
- In 2023, the Supreme Court in **Arun Muthuvel vs. Union of India case** allowed a **woman with Mayer-Rokitansky-Kuster-Hauser (MRKH) Syndrome** to **undergo surrogacy with a donor egg**.
  - MRKH is a rare congenital disorder that **affects female reproductive system** and causes **absolute uterine factor infertility**.



### About Surrogacy and its types

- Surrogacy is a practice whereby **one woman bears and gives birth to a child for an intending couple**.
  - **Intending couple** means a couple **who have a medical indication necessitating gestational surrogacy** and who intend to become parents through surrogacy.
  - **Gestational surrogacy** is a practice whereby a **surrogate mother carries a child for intending couple** through implantation of an embryo in her womb and **child is not genetically related to surrogate mother**.
  - **Traditional surrogacy** is the result of artificial insemination of the surrogate mother with the intended father's sperm making her biological mother of the child she carries.
- **Type of surrogacy**
  - **Altruistic surrogacy**: It involves **no monetary compensation** to surrogate mother **other than medical expenses and insurance coverage** during pregnancy.
  - **Commercial surrogacy**: It includes surrogacy, or its related procedures undertaken **for monetary benefit or reward** (in cash or kind) exceeding the basic medical expenses and insurance coverage.
- The government **banned surrogacy for foreign nationals in 2015**.

### Surrogacy Laws in India

- **Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021 (Surrogacy Act 2021)**
  - **Only altruistic surrogacy is allowed** and penalises commercial surrogacy.
  - Establish **National Assisted Reproductive Technology and Surrogacy Board (NARTSB)** to review and monitor implementation of Act, supervise functioning of State ARTSB (SARTSB), etc.
  - **Abortion of surrogate child** requires **written consent of surrogate mother and authorization** of appropriate authority.
    - ✓ This authorization must be **compliant with MTP Act, 1971**.
- **Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Act, 2021 (ART Act)**
  - It aims to **regulate and supervise ART clinics and banks**, prevent its misuse and ensure safe and ethical practice of ART services for addressing the issues of reproductive health.
  - It brings into its ambit the **treatment of surrogacy and hence ensures protection of rights of surrogate mothers**.

- **Other key provisions of Surrogacy (Regulation) Rules, 2022**
  - **Number of attempts** of any surrogacy procedure on surrogate mother shall **not be more than 3 times**.
  - **A surrogate mother may be allowed for abortion during surrogacy** in accordance with MTP Act, 1971.
  - **Intending woman or couple shall purchase general health insurance coverage in favour of surrogate mother** for a period of 36 months from an insurance company or an agent recognized by Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDAI).

 <b>Eligibility criteria for surrogate mother</b>	 <b>Eligibility criteria for couples</b>
A married woman having a <b>child of her own, and 25 to 35 years old</b>	If they have been <b>married for five years, wife aged between 25-50 years and husband between 26-55 years</b>
No woman shall act as a <b>surrogate mother more than once in her lifetime</b> .	Couple must <b>not have any living child</b> (biological, adopted or surrogate), except when child is mentally or physically challenged or suffers from life threatening disorder or fatal illness.
<b>Possess a certificate of medical and psychological fitness</b> for surrogacy	Should have ' <b>essential</b> ' <b>certificate</b> if suffering from proven infertility of either partner <b>certified by District Medical Board</b> , and an <b>order of parentage and custody of the surrogate child</b> , passed by a <b>Magistrate's court</b>
	<b>Insurance coverage for 36 months for the surrogate mother</b> , covering any postpartum complications.

## 1.2. ABORTION LAW IN INDIA

### Why in the News?

Recently, Supreme Court **denied a woman's plea to terminate a 26-week pregnancy** noting that there was **no immediate threat to mother** and it was **not a case of foetal abnormality**.

### Abortion law in India

- Abortion is **illegal under Sections 312 and 313 of Indian Penal Code (IPC)**, unless it is performed in a manner prescribed under Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, 1971.
  - The act was **amended in 2021** to make the MTP more accessible to women.
  - Sections 88 to 92 under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 contain provisions related to causing the miscarriage of women.
- **MTP (Amendment) Act 2021** allows termination of pregnancy in following cases:
  - **Upto 20 weeks:** Available to all on the **advice of one doctor**.
  - **For 20 to 24 weeks:** Available **only in specific categories of women cases** subject to advice of **two doctors**.
    - ✓ Categories of women include **survivors of rape or incest, change of marital status** during ongoing pregnancy, **risk to life of pregnant woman** or of grave injury to her physical or mental health, risk

### Global status of abortion laws

- According to **Centre for Reproductive Rights**, **more than 60 countries** have **liberalized** their abortion laws over **past 30 years**.
- Only **4 countries** –US, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Poland - have **rolled back legality of abortion**.



of **abnormalities to child, differently abled women, minors, and pregnancy in humanitarian settings** or disaster or emergencies.

- **Beyond 24 weeks:** Available only on grounds of **foetal abnormalities** on advice of a **medical board**.
- In 2022, SC ruled that for **sole purpose of MTP Act**, the meaning of rape must include marital rape.
  - Further, SC also **extended the right to safe and legal abortion upto 24 weeks to unmarried and single women**.

### 1.3. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

#### Why in the News?

As per the World Health Organization, nearly **one in three women worldwide experience physical or sexual violence** during their lifetime.

#### Status of Domestic Violence against women in India

- According to National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) 2019-2021:
  - Percentage of spousal abuse was **higher in Karnataka**, followed by Bihar, Manipur, and Telangana.
  - **29.3% ever-married women aged 18-49 years** have experienced spousal violence (physical and/or sexual violence).

#### Law for Domestic violence in India

- **Article 15 (3)** gives power to the legislature to make special provision for women and children. In exercise of this power, the **Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA) 2005 enacted**.
- **Key features of PWDVA, 2005**
  - Domestic violence encompasses **physical, verbal, emotional, economic, or/and sexual abuse**.
  - **Coverage:** All women who may be mother, sister, wife, widow, or partners living in a shared household. **A child is also entitled to relief** under act.
  - **Complaint could be filed against**
    - ✓ **Any person** who is, or has been, in a **domestic relationship with aggrieved woman**.
      - Supreme Court in 2016 in Hiral P Harsora and ors Vs. Kusum Narottamdas Harsora & Ors Case has **struck down the words “adult male” before the word “person”**.
    - ✓ Relatives of husband or male partner
    - ✓ Includes both male and female relatives of male partner.
  - An **aggrieved person or a Protection Officer or any other person on behalf of aggrieved person** may present an **application to Magistrate** seeking one or more reliefs under this Act.
  - Provision for **shelter home or a medical facility** to provide shelter or medical aid to the victim.
  - **Act is in addition to existing laws**.
    - ✓ **Reliefs under PWDVA** can be asked for in other legal proceedings e.g. petition for divorce, maintenance, Section 498A IPC, etc.
      - **Section 498A of IPC:** Whoever, being the husband or relative of husband of a woman, subjects such woman to cruelty shall be **punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years** and shall also be **liable to fine**.
      - **Section 85 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023** makes provisions related to domestic violence against women.

#### Other initiatives taken to protect women from violence

- **PWDVA, 2005** only provides for **civil remedies for marital rape** and no criminal proceedings can be initiated against their perpetrator.
- **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023** criminalises sexual intercourse with a woman by deceitful means or making false promises.
- **RESPECT Women Framework:** Developed by UN Women and WHO in collaboration with ten other UN, bilateral, and multilateral agencies, to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls.
- **One Stop Centres** to assist women affected by violence, both in private and public spaces under one roof.

### 1.3.1. DOWRY SYSTEM IN INDIA

#### Why in the News?

A new study revealed that as education and job opportunities for men in India have improved over the decades, the prevalence of dowry has increased.

#### Dowry system in India

- Dowry, also known as **Dahej (North India) or Sthreedhanam (South India)**, is defined by **Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961** as-
  - Any property or valuable security given or agreed to be given either directly or indirectly by one party/ parents to other party in connection with marriage.
- Dowry death was added as a new offence in IPC only in 1986.**
  - Section 304B (relates to Dowry Death) of IPC** is read in conjunction with Section 113B (on Presumption of Dowry death) of Indian Evidence Act, 1872 in case of a dowry death.
  - Section 80 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023** contains provisions related to 'Dowry Death'.
- Apart from dowry death, **cruelty** (i.e., torture or harassment of a woman) and **domestic violence** are other common types of dowry crimes.

### Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961

- Dowry is **cognizable offence** for purpose of investigation.
- Every offence is **non-bailable and non-compoundable**.
- Burden of proof is on accused.**
- Dowry Prohibition Officers** could be established by State Government.
- Punishment with imprisonment or fine or both** for giving or taking or abetting the giving or taking of dowry, and demanding dowry advertisement related to dowry.

### 1.4. WOMEN IN STEM

#### Why in the News?

Recently, the Prime Minister launched the Boeing Sukanya Program to support girl's entry into the aviation sector.

#### About Boeing Sukanya Program

- Aims to support **entry of girl children** from across India into **country's aviation sector**.
- It will provide opportunities for girls and women to **learn critical skills in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields** and **train for jobs** in aviation sector.
- For young girls, program will **create STEM Labs at 150 planned locations** to spark interest in STEM careers and **provide scholarships to women who are training to be pilots.**
  - 15 percent of India's pilots are women** which is 3 times more than global average.

#### Initiatives taken to promote women in STEM

- I-STEM (Indian Science Technology and Engineering facilities Map):** By the Office of Principal Scientific Advisor provides a platform to provide Research infrastructure and Labs that can be availed by users across India.

## Data Bank

- Female Enrolment in STEM Courses: Increased to 42.6% in 2021-22.**
- Female participation in workforce : 29.2% of all STEM workers are women.**



- **Women in Engineering, Science, and Technology (WEST):** A new I-STEM initiative to empower women to contribute to the science, technology, and innovation ecosystem.
- **Vigyan Jyoti:** By the Department of Science & Technology to create a level-playing field for the meritorious girls in high school to pursue STEM.
- **Knowledge Involvement Research Advancement through Nurturing (KIRAN):** Scheme of Department of Science & Technology encourages women scientists in the field of S&T.
- **Gender Advancement for Transforming Institutions (GATI):** It seeks to bring institutional reforms to facilitate women in STEM and medicine disciplines at all levels.
- **Consolidation of University Research for Innovation and Excellence (CURIE):** It provides support to women universities in improving their R&D facilities.
- **Biotechnology Career Advancement and Reorientation Programme (BioCARE):** By Department of Biotechnology for Career Development of employed/ unemployed women Scientists for whom it will be the first extramural research grant.

## 1.5. SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT WORKPLACE

### Why in the News?

Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 or **POSH Act 2013** completed **10 years**.

### About Sexual harassment at workplace

- **POSH Act, 2013** was enacted to **make workplaces safer** for women by preventing, prohibiting, and redressing acts of sexual harassment against them in workplace.
  - Act **gave legislative backing** to **Vishaka Guidelines** laid down by Supreme Court in 1997.
  - Vishaka Guidelines **defined sexual harassment; imposed three key obligations** on institutions – prohibition, prevention, redressal; and mandated institutions to **establish Complaints Committee**.

### Key Provisions of POSH Act 2013

- **Definition of Sexual harassment:** It includes any one or more of the following **unwelcome acts or behaviour** (whether directly or by implication), namely:
  - Physical contact or advances;
  - A demand or request for sexual favours;
  - Making sexually coloured remarks;
  - Showing pornography;
  - Any other unwelcome physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature.
- **Definition of workplace:** **Any place** visited by employee arising out of or during course of employment, **including transportation** provided by employer for undertaking such a journey.
  - A workplace **covers both organised and un-organised sectors**.
- **Aggrieved woman:** Covers **all women**, irrespective of their age or employment status and whether in **organized or unorganized sectors, public or private**.
  - It also covers **clients, customers and domestic workers** as well.
- **Grievance redressal mechanism**

### Global Norms

- **ILO Convention 190** is first international treaty to recognize right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment.
  - **India has not ratified this convention.**
- **UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**
  - It was adopted by UN General Assembly in 1979 and has been **ratified by India**.

### Complaints Committee

- **Internal Complaints Committee (ICC)** is mandatory in every **private or public organization that has 10 or more employees**.
  - ICC needs to have a **minimum of four members**, of which **half must be women**.
  - **ICC has powers similar to those of a civil court.**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>District Officer to constitute Local Committee</b> to receive complaints from organizations with less than 10 workers or if complaint is against the employer itself.</li> </ul>
<b>Procedure of filing complaint</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Any aggrieved woman may make a written complaint</b> of sexual harassment at workplace to the Internal Committee if so constituted, or the Local Committee, in case it is not so constituted.</li> <li>• <b>In case of physical or mental incapacity or death or otherwise</b>, her <b>legal heir or such other person</b> as may be prescribed may make a complaint. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ In pursuance of this, <b>Union Government, through a notification, prescribed</b> relatives, friends, co-worker, officer of National Commission for Women, etc., to file complaint.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Complaint must be made <b>“within three months from the date of incident”</b>. However, <b>ICC can extend time limit</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Conciliation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ICC may, before inquiry, and at request of aggrieved woman</b>, take steps to settle matter between her and respondent through conciliation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ However, <b>“no monetary settlement”</b> shall be made as a basis of conciliation.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Inquiry</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICC may <b>either forward</b> victim’s complaint to police, or it can <b>start an inquiry</b> that has to be <b>completed within 90 days</b>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ When inquiry is completed, <b>ICC must provide a report of its findings to employer within 10 days</b>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Action against perpetrator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If allegations of sexual harassment are proved, ICC will recommend to employer to take action <b>“in accordance with the provisions of service rules”</b> of company.</li> </ul>
<b>Appeal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If either the aggrieved woman or the respondent is not satisfied, they <b>may appeal in court within 90 days</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>False complaint</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICC “may recommend” to employer to take action against woman, or person who has made complaint, in <b>“accordance with the provisions of the service rules”</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Ensuring privacy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identity of <b>woman, respondent, witness</b>, any information on inquiry, recommendation and action taken, should not be made public.</li> </ul>

## 1.6. MENSTRUAL HYGIENE IN INDIA

### Why in the News?








Recently, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare released the Draft National Menstrual Hygiene Policy, 2023.

### About Draft Menstrual Hygiene Policy

- It **recognizes menstruation as a natural bodily process for all who menstruate** including girls and women of reproductive age and **ensures stigma-free experience** during menstruation.
  - It focuses on **prioritizing underserved and vulnerable populations**, ensuring equitable access to menstrual hygiene resources.
  - **Spain** is the **first European country to grant paid menstrual leave** to workers.





Current programs for Menstrual Hygiene Management	Other initiatives to promote Menstrual Hygiene
 <b>Menstrual Hygiene Scheme 2011</b> focussed on distribution of low-cost sanitary napkins in communities through ASHAs.	 <b>28th May every year</b> is celebrated as <b>Menstrual Hygiene day.</b>
 <b>Swachh Bharat Mission 2014</b> included menstrual hygiene management.	 <b>Red Dot Campaign by United Nations</b> to spread awareness regarding menstrual hygiene.
 <b>National Guidelines for Menstrual Hygiene Management 2015</b> intensify work on menstrual hygiene management.	 <b>Right to Women to Menstrual Leave and Free Access to Menstrual Health Products Bill, 2022</b> to provide three days right to paid leave during menstruation period.
<b>Schemes by various states</b>  <b>Asmita Yojana (Maharashtra), Udaan (Rajasthan) and Khushi (Odisha)</b> for distributing subsidized or free sanitary napkins to adolescent girls.	



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# फाउंडेशन कोर्स

## सामान्य अध्ययन

### प्रारंभिक एवं मुख्य परीक्षा 2025

**इनोवेटिव क्लासरूम प्रोग्राम**

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- सीसैट कक्षाएं
- मौलिक अवधारणाओं की समझ के विकास एवं विश्लेषणात्मक क्षमता निर्माण पर विशेष ध्यान
- PT 365 कक्षाएं
- एनीमेशन, पॉवर प्वाइंट, वीडियो जैसी तकनीकी सुविधाओं का प्रयोग
- MAINS 365 कक्षाएं
- अंतर - विषयक समझ विकसित करने का प्रयास
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- मुख्य परीक्षा टेस्ट सीरीज
- नियमित क्लास टेस्ट एवं व्यक्तिगत मूल्यांकन
- निबंध टेस्ट सीरीज
- निबंध लेखन - शैली की कक्षाएं
- करेंट अफेयर्स मैगजीन

नोट: ऑनलाइन छात्र हमारे पाठ्यक्रम की लाइव वीडियो कक्षाएं अपने घर पर ऑनलाइन प्लेटफॉर्म पर देख सकते हैं। छात्र लाइव चैट विकल्प के माध्यम से कक्षा के दौरान अपने संदेह और विषय संबंधी प्रश्न पूछ सकते हैं। वे अपने संदेह और प्रश्न नोट भी कर सकते हैं और दिल्ली केंद्र में हमारे कक्षा सलाहकार को बता सकते हैं और हम फोन/मेल के माध्यम से प्रश्नों का उत्तर देंगे।

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## 2. CHILDREN

### 2.1. CHILD LABOUR

#### Why in the News?

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour, Textiles and Skill Development stated that implementation of a policy to eliminate child labour has a long way to go before achieving its ultimate goal by 2025.

#### What is Child Labour?

- According to ILO, 'Child labour' is often defined as **work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential, and their dignity**, and that is **harmful to physical and mental development**. It refers to work that is:
  - Interferes with their schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school, obliging them to leave school prematurely or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.
- As per Census 2011**
  - There are **10.1 million working children between age of 5-14 years in India**.
  - Together, **Uttar Pradesh followed by Bihar, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh** constitute nearly 55% of total working children in India.

#### Initiatives taken for eradication of child labour

- India ratified ILO **Convention 182** on Worst Forms of Child Labour and **Convention 138** on the Minimum Age of Employment.
- Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act 2016:** Prohibit employment of Children below 14 years in all employment and also with provisions for prohibition on employment of adolescents (14-18 Years) in the scheduled hazardous occupations and processes.
- National Child Labour Project (NCLP) Scheme:** Under it, Special Schools/Rehabilitation Centres for the rehabilitation of child labourers are opened.
  - It is a Central Sector scheme under the **Ministry of Labour and Employment**.
- PENCiL (Platform for Effective Enforcement for No Child Labour) Portal:** It has become a pivotal tool in rescuing and rehabilitating victims of child labour.
  - It is managed by **Ministry of Labour and Employment**.
- Bachpan Bachao Andolan (Save the Childhood Movement):** An NGO that helped liberate more than 85,000 children in India from exploitation- through education and rehabilitation.

#### Constitutional Provisions Related to Child labour



**Article 21(A): Free and Compulsory education** to all children aged 6-14 years.



**Article 45: Early childhood care and education** for all children until age of 6 years.



**Article 23: Prohibits and criminalises human trafficking and forced labour.**



**Article 24: Prohibits employment of children below age of 14** in factories, mines, and other hazardous employment.



**Article 39: Health and strength of workers, men and women, and tender age of children are not abused.**

### 2.2. CHILD ADOPTION

#### Why in the News?

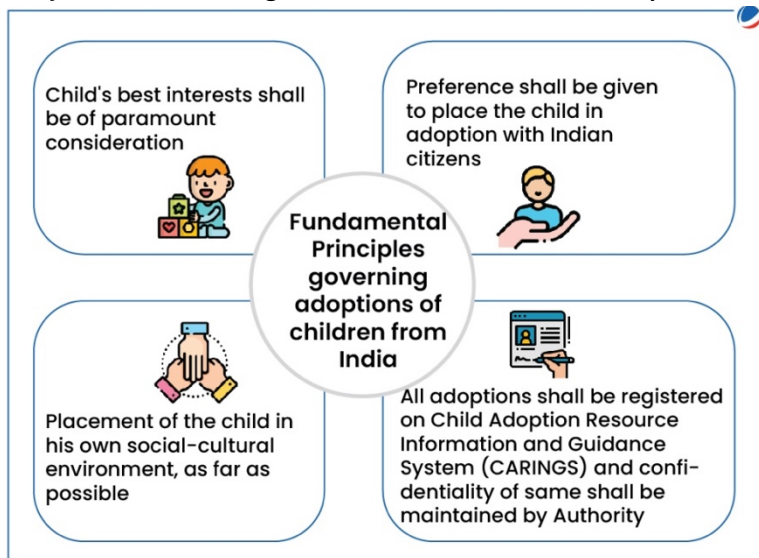
Supreme Court in **Temple of Healing v. Union of India** judgement called for **collaborative efforts to bring children into adoption pool**.

## About Temple of Healing v. Union of India Judgment

- Children living in **Childcare Institutions (CCI)**, whose **parents** have **not visited them** for **over a year** or have **“unfit” parents or guardians**, should be identified and brought into adoption pool.
  - Unfit parent or guardian** refers to parent who is unable or unwilling for parenting and indulge in substance (drug) abuse. It also includes parents who have **abused or neglected the child**, having a **criminal record**, etc.
- SC directed states and union territories to **begin bi-monthly drive to identify children in Orphaned-Abandoned-Surrendered (OAS) category in CCIs**.
  - It is imperative for States to **ensure registration of all OAS children in district on Child Adoption Resource Information and Guidance System (CARINGS) portal**.
  - CCI** provides **care and protection** to children including Children’s Home, Open Shelter, **Specialized Adoption Agency (SAA)** and a Fit Facility. These are recognised under **Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act (JJ Act), 2015**.

## Adoption Process in India

- Definition:** Process through which adopted child is **permanently separated from his biological parents and becomes lawful child of his adoptive parents with all rights, privileges and responsibilities** that are attached to a biological child.
- Legislation governing Adoption:**
  - Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act (HAMA) 1956:** It amends and codifies the law relating to adoptions and maintenance among Hindus. It is applicable to any person,
    - ✓ who is a **Hindu by religion in any of its forms** including Virashaiva, Lingayat or follower of Brahmo, Prarthana or Arya Samaj; **Buddhist, Jaina or Sikh by religion**.
  - JJ Act, 2015 and Adoption Regulations, 2022:** Governs inter- and intra- country adoption of orphaned, abandoned, or surrendered children and children of relatives.
- Institutional Structure:**
  - Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA):** Statutory body acting as nodal body governing all aspects of inter and intra country adoptions under JJ Act.
  - State Adoption resource Agency (SARA):** Nodal body within State to promote and monitor adoption and non-institutional care in coordination with CARA.
  - District Child Welfare Committee:** Mandatorily constituted by States for each district for with children in need of care and protection and declaring them legally free for adoption.
  - District Child Protection Unit (DCPU):** Identifies orphan, abandoned and surrendered children in district, places them in CCIs.
  - Specialized Adoption Agency (SAA):** Recognized body for the purpose of **placing children in adoption**.
  - Authorized Foreign Adoption Agency (AFAA):** Recognized foreign social or child welfare agency coordinating all matters relating to adoption of an Indian child by citizen of that country.



## 2.3. JUVENILE JUSTICE (CARE AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN) ACT, 2015

### Why in the News?

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) issued guidelines for the first time for assessment of child suspects in heinous offences category of JJ Act, 2015.

## Definition of Child

- **JJ Act defines child** as a person who has **not completed 18 years of age**. In 2015, it introduced a provision wherein a child in **age group of 16-18 years** could be **tried as an adult** in case of **heinous offences**.
- **Juvenile Justice Board** carries assessment to **determine whether to try such a child as an adult or a minor**.

## Comparison between JJ Act, 2015 and JJ Amendment Act, 2021

Specifications	JJ Act, 2015	JJ Amendment Act, 2021
<b>Adoption</b>	Adoption of a child is <b>final once a civil court issues an adoption order</b> .	<b>District Magistrates (DM), including Additional DM, can issue adoption orders.</b>
<b>Appeals</b>	There will be <b>no appeal for any order made by a Child Welfare Committee</b> .	Any person aggrieved by an adoption order passed by DM may <b>file an appeal before the Divisional Commissioner, within 30 days of such order</b> .
<b>Categories of Offences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offences committed by juveniles are categorised as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Heinous offences</b>, minimum punishment under IPC or any other law for the time being in force is <b>imprisonment for seven years or more</b>.</li> <li>○ <b>serious offences</b>, punishment is <b>imprisonment between three to seven years</b>.</li> <li>○ <b>petty offences</b>, maximum punishment is <b>imprisonment up to three years</b>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Redefines 'serious offences'</b> to give effect to the recommendation of Supreme Court in Shilpa Mittal v. State of NCT of Delhi case.</li> <li>• <b>Maximum imprisonment</b> for a <b>term more than seven years</b> but no minimum imprisonment or <b>minimum imprisonment of less than seven years</b> is provided.</li> </ul>
<b>Designated Court</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offences punishable with imprisonment of <b>more than 7 years</b> will be cognizable, non-bailable and triable in <b>Children's Court</b>.</li> <li>• Other offences (punishable with imprisonment of <b>less than seven years</b>) shall be tried by <b>Magistrate of First Class</b>.</li> </ul>	All offences will be tried in <b>Children's Court</b> .

## 2.4. CHILD TRAFFICKING IN INDIA

### Why in the News?

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) approved a ten-point Call to Action for implementation of comprehensive measures to prevent child trafficking.

### About Child trafficking

- Child trafficking manifests in form of **domestic labour, forced child labour across industries, and illegal activities** such as begging, organ trade and commercial sex purposes.
  - As per NCRB, 8 children were **trafficked every day in India in 2021** for **labour, begging and sexual exploitation**.
- **Laws governing Anti-Trafficking Crimes**
  - **Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956** prohibits immoral trafficking and sex work.
  - **Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976** abolishes bonded labour system to prevent economic and physical exploitation of weaker sections of people.
  - **Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Act, 1994** makes commercial dealing in human organs a punishable offence.
  - **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012** protects children from offences of sexual assault, sexual harassment, and pornography.



## 2.5. AGE OF CONSENT

### Why in the News?

22<sup>nd</sup> Law Commission in its 283<sup>rd</sup> report advised that the age of consent should be not reduced from 18 to 16 years.

### What is the Age of Consent?

- Age of consent is defined as **age at which one is considered legally competent to consent for sexual activity**.
  - The objective of the minimum age of sexual consent is **to protect adolescents from sexual abuse and from the consequences of early sexual activity** on their rights and development.
- **POCSO Act, 2012 fixed the age of being categorised as a child at 18 years**, thus making it default "age of consent".
  - **POCSO Act, 2012** protects children from offences of sexual assault, sexual harassment, pornography and provides for the establishment of **Special Courts** for trial of such offences.
- In line with POCSO Act, **Section 375 of Indian Penal Code was amended by Criminal Law Amendment Act, 2013 to raise the age of consent to sexual intercourse to 18**.
  - However, **exception for a man having intercourse with his wife who is not under the age of 15 years** remained under IPC.
  - Supreme Court, in **Independent Thought vs. UOI case**, read down this exception under the IPC.
  - **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023 raised the age of consent for a married woman** under the definition of rape (Section 63) **from 15 to 18 years**.
  - **Section 63 of the BNS, however, retains the marital rape exception**.

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## 3. OTHER VULNERABLE SECTIONS

### 3.1. SUPREME COURT JUDGMENT ON LGBTQIA+ RIGHTS

#### Why in the News?

Recently, SC in **Supriyo @ Supriya Chakraborty vs Union of India** case unanimously **refused to accord legal recognition to marriages** between persons of same sex.

#### LGBTQIA+ rights: Court verdict

Issues	Court Verdict
Right of transgender persons to marry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unanimously held that there was <b>no fundamental, unequivocal right to marry</b> in India.</li> <li><b>Transgender persons in heterosexual relations</b> have the right to marry under the existing laws, including in personal laws regulating marriages.</li> </ul>
Right to enter a Civil Union for queer couple	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Court <b>cannot prescribe a choice of civil unions to queer couples</b>.</li> <li>Government is not obligated to recognize bouquet of rights flowing from such a Union. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Civil Union is a <b>legal recognition, originally created for same- sex couples</b> in jurisdictions where they are <b>not legally allowed to marry</b>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Interpretation of Special Marriage Act (SMA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Court <b>declined to invalidate or interpret SMA in a gender-neutral manner</b>, stating that such actions would encroach upon legislative domain and could have a "cascading" effect on other laws.</li> </ul>
Adoption rights for non-heterosexual couples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Upheld restriction imposed by Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA)</b> on queer couples from adopting.</li> <li>Striking down the rules may have deleterious, "disastrous" and "anomalous outcome" that only legislature and executive could remedy.</li> </ul>

#### LGBTQIA+ Rights across the world

- Currently, there are **more than 130 countries** that have **decriminalized homosexuality**.
- The **Netherlands** was the **first country to legalize same-sex marriages** in 2001.
- Since then, **more than 30 countries** around the world have **legalized same-sex marriages**.

#### Judicial pronouncements related to LGBTQIA+ rights



**NALSA vs. UoI, 2014:** Recognition of non- binary gender identities.



**Navtej Singh Johar vs. UoI, 2018:** Decriminalisation of Section 377 of IPC.

#### 3.1.1. TRANSGENDER RIGHTS

#### Why in the News?

NITI Aayog report "**Best Practices in Social Sector**" mentioned "**Prayatna**" project, a livelihood and enterprise training program for Transgender people in Delhi-NCR.

#### About Prayatna Project

- It aims to **help beneficiaries to attain a basic quality of life and impart entrepreneurship skills** to some of them.
- It was approved by **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)** Executive Committee.
- Nodal agency:** Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), through its implementing agency National Skill Development Centre (NSDC).

#### About Transgender Community

- Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019** defines Transgender person, as a person whose gender does not match with the gender assigned to that person at birth.

- It includes **trans-man or trans-woman**, person with intersex variations, person having such socio-cultural identities as kinner, hijra, etc.

#### About Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019

Specifications	Detail
<b>Prohibits discrimination against Transgender</b>	In employment, education, housing, healthcare and other services.
<b>Certificate of identity</b>	Allows <b>self-perception of gender Identity</b> . However, each person would have to be recognised as transgender on basis of certificate of <b>identity issued by district magistrate</b> .
<b>Grievance redressal mechanism</b>	Every establishment shall designate a person to be a <b>complaint officer to deal with complaints</b> relating to violation of provisions.
<b>Right of residence</b>	<b>No child shall be separated from parents or immediate family</b> on ground of being transgender, except on an order of a competent court, in the interest of such child.
<b>Obligation of educational Institutions</b>	Every educational institution funded or recognised by appropriate Government shall provide <b>inclusive education and opportunities for sports, recreation and leisure activities</b> to transgender persons without discrimination on an equal basis with others.
<b>National Council for Transgender Persons</b>	To advise Central Government on <b>formulation of policies, programmes, legislation and projects</b> with respect to transgender persons.

#### Initiatives taken for Transgender community

- SMILE (Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise)**: An umbrella scheme for socio-economic development of transgenders, includes **two sub-schemes** –
  - Comprehensive Rehabilitation for Welfare of Transgender Persons, and
  - Comprehensive Rehabilitation of persons engaged in the act of Begging.
- National Portal for Transgender Persons** launched by Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment (MoSJE).
- Garima Greh**: A Shelter Home for Transgender Persons.

### 3.2. TRIBAL WELFARE

#### Why in the News?

Recently, Union government launched **PM JANMAN (PM- Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan)** on Janjatiya Gaurav Divas (Tribal Pride Day).

#### About Tribal Pride Day

- It is celebrated on **November 15 (since 2021)** to recognize the efforts of tribal freedom fighters.
  - The date is **birth anniversary of Shri Birsa Munda**.

*(For more details on Birsa Munda, kindly refer to the 2024 PT 365 Culture Document.)*

#### About PM JANMAN

- In **Union Budget 2023-24**, **Pradhan Mantri PVTG Development Mission** was announced, following which PM JANMAN was launched.
- It comprises of **11 critical interventions** through **9 ministries** with an estimated outlay of ₹ 24104 crore for **3 years**.
- It aims to **saturate PVTG households and habitations with basic facilities** like safe housing, clean drinking water and sanitation, improved access to education, health, and nutrition, etc.
  - In addition, saturation will be ensured for Sick Cell Disease Elimination, TB Elimination, 100% immunization, PM Surakshit Matritva Yojana, PM Matru Vandana Yojana, PM Poshan, etc.



## Tribals in India

- **Article 342 defines** Scheduled Tribes (ST) as tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within tribal communities which the **President may specify by public notification**.
- **ST population in India:** 8.6% (as per Census of India 2011).
  - Lakshadweep (94.8%), followed by Mizoram (94.4%), has the highest ST population.
  - In absolute numbers, **Madhya Pradesh has the highest population of STs**.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
- International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples also known as **World Tribal Day** is observed every year on **August 9 to promote and protect the rights of indigenous populations** around the world.
  - The date marks the day of the **first meeting**, in 1982, of the **UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations** of Sub-Commission on Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.

### Panchsheel Principles for Tribal development

- **People should develop along the lines of their own genius**, and imposition of alien values should be avoided.
- **Tribal rights to land and forest should be respected**.
- **Teams of tribals should be trained** in the work of **administration and development**.
- **Should not over administer these areas** or overwhelm them with a multiplicity of schemes.
- **Judge results**, not by statistics, but **by the quality of human character** that is evolved.

## Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)

- These are **centrally recognized special categories** from among STs.
- First recognized in **1973** as **Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs)** based on recommendations of the **U N Dhebar Commission (1961)**.
- In **2006**, the Government of India **renamed the PTGs as PVTGs**.
- **Criteria for identifying PVTGs:**
  - Pre-agricultural level of technology
  - Low level of literacy
  - Economic backwardness
  - A declining or stagnant population
- Currently, there are **75 PVTGs** spread over **18 states** and the Union Territory of **Andaman and Nicobar Islands**.
- **Odisha** houses **highest number (13)** of PVTGs in India.
- Recently, **Bharia PVTG in Madhya Pradesh** and **Kamar and Baiga tribe in Chhattisgarh** were granted **Habitat Rights** under the Forest Rights Act, 2006.

(Note: Bharia, Kamar, and Baiga are listed as PVTGs in both Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.)

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## Measures undertaken for Tribal Welfare

Constitutional Provisions	Legislative measures	Government schemes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Article 244</b> Administration of Scheduled Areas and Tribes of the States (Schedule V).</li> <li>• <b>Article 275</b> Grant of special funds for promoting the welfare of Scheduled Tribes (STs).</li> <li>• <b>Article 342:</b> Notification of ST's.</li> <li>• <b>Article 338A:</b> National Commission for STs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996:</b> Preserve tribal population from exploitation with an active involvement of Gram Sabha.</li> <li>• <b>Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006:</b> Ensure land tenure, livelihood and food security of the forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers.</li> <li>• <b>SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989</b> prevent atrocities against members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Eklavya Model Residential School (EMRS)</b> to impart quality education to ST children in remote areas.</li> <li>• <b>Pradhan Mantri Adi Adarsh Gram Yojna (PMAAGY)</b> to transform villages with significant tribal population into model village (Adarsh Gram).</li> <li>• <b>Pradhan Mantri Jan Jatiya Vikas Mission (PMJVM)</b> to strengthen tribal entrepreneurship initiatives and to facilitate livelihood opportunities.</li> <li>• <b>Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana (PMKKKY)</b> for welfare of areas and people affected by mining related operations.</li> </ul>

### 3.2.1. DENOTIFIED TRIBES (DNTS)

#### Why in the News?

Recently, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) stressed the need to implement the **Idate Commission** report which recommended **setting up a permanent commission for De-Notified, Nomadic, and Semi Nomadic Tribes (DNTs)** in India.

#### About Denotified Tribes

- Denotified Tribes, most vulnerable and deprived, are communities that were 'notified' as being 'born criminal' during British regime under the **Criminal Tribes Act, 1871**.
  - These are a **heterogeneous group engaged in various occupations** such as transport, key-making, salt trading, entertainment (acrobats, snake charmers, jugglers, etc.), pastoralists, etc.
- **Criminal Tribes Act, 1871** was repealed by **Habitual Offenders Act, 1952**.
  - Several Denotified Tribes were included in ST, Scheduled Caste (SC) and Other Backward Caste (OBC) lists because they come from diverse social backgrounds.
- As per **Renke Commission (2008)**, there are nearly **1,500 nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes** and **198 Denotified tribes**, comprising 15 crore Indians.
- **August 31** is celebrated as **Vimukta Jatis day** in India by DNTs communities.

#### About Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes

- All **nomadic tribes (NTs)** are not DNTs, but all DNTs are NTs.
- Nomads and Semi-Nomads are **social groups who undertakes a fairly frequent, usually seasonal physical movement** as part of their livelihood strategy and moves from one place to another.
  - **Hakki Pikki Tribe** are a **semi-nomadic tribal group** from Karnataka.
- **Three types of nomadic communities:**
  - **Hunter/trappers** of birds and animals, gamer, etc., such as Konda Reddis, Chenchus etc.
  - **Pastoral communities** such as Pardis, Guzzars, Banjaras, Bhils, Kurabas, Madhuras, etc.
  - **Peripatetic groups of peddlers**, fortune tellers, storytellers, acrobats, dancers, dramatists, etc.

## Steps Taken by Government for DNTs

- **National Commission for De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (NCDNT):** To prepare a state-wise list of castes belonging to DNTs.
- **Dr. Ambedkar Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarship for DNTs Boys and Girls:** Centrally sponsored scheme to improve educational empowerment of DNTs who are not covered under SC/ST/OBC category.
- **Nanaji Deshmukh Scheme of construction of Hostels for DNTs Boys and Girls:** Centrally sponsored scheme would be run through State Governments/UT Administrations.
- **Scheme for Economic Empowerment of DNT Communities (SEED):** Launched by Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment to provide **free competitive exam coaching to DNTs students**, provide health insurance to families etc.
- **Development and Welfare Board for De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities** constituted in 2019.

## 3.3. PERSON WITH DISABILITIES (PWDS)

### Why in the News?

Court of Chief Commissioners of PwDs delivered two landmark judgments that can significantly impact society and reshape attitudes towards PwDs.

### About Judgements

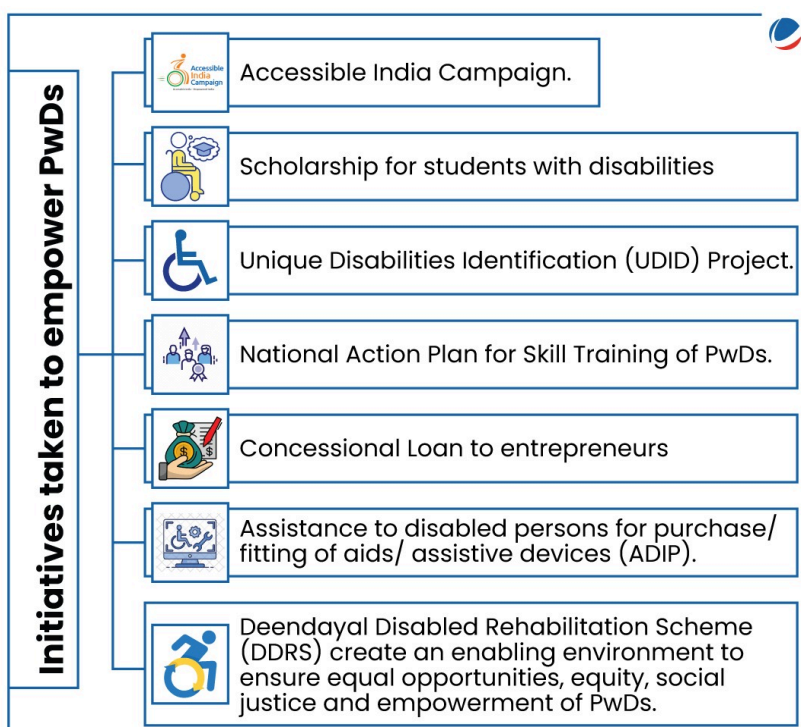
- Any government office in the country, operating from buildings that are not accessible to Divyangjan, must **relocate their services to the ground floor or accessible location** within same facility.
- Court emphasized that **all airlines operating in country** (Indian or foreign), are responsible for implementing the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (RPwD Act)**.

### About Office of Chief Commissioner of PwD

- It was **set up under Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995 (PwD Act)**.
  - **RPwD Act 2016** (which replaced PwD Act, 1995) provides for Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities and two Commissioners.
- It has been **mandated to take steps to safeguard the rights of PwD** and to identify any programme/policy inconsistent with RPwD Act
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.

### About Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016

- **Reservation for PwDs**
  - **Not less than 5%** reservation in Government/Government aided higher educational institutions.
  - **Not less than 4%** reservation in Government jobs.
    - ✓ **Reservation is not applicable to police forces:** Indian Police, RPF, CAPF, Police for Delhi and other UTs.
- **21 types of disabilities** have been recognized, including intellectual disability, acid attack victims, etc.
- **Free education for children with benchmark disabilities:** Every child with benchmark disability between the age of 6 to 18 years shall have the right to free education in a neighbourhood school, or in a special school, of his choice.





- **“Person with benchmark disability”** means a person with not less than 40% of specified disability.
- **Participation of PwDs in the decision-making process** through the Central and State Advisory Board on Disability.
- **Special Court in every district** for faster adjudication of cases under the Act.
- Focuses on **promoting participation of PwDs in skill development**, sports and recreation.
- **Punishment for various offences and violations** of the provisions of the Act was introduced.

### 3.4. MANUAL SCAVENGING

#### Why in the News?

The government, in a reply to Lok Sabha, informed that out of 766 districts in the country, 714 districts have reported themselves as manual scavenging-free.

#### About Manual Scavenging

- It refers to the **practice of removing human excreta by hand** from sewers or septic tanks.
- It is banned under **Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 (PEMSR)**.
- In case of violation, punishment with imprisonment **upto 2 years or fine upto Rs. One Lakh or both**.

#### About Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013

<b>Who are Manual Scavengers?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Any person who has been <b>employed to handle un-decomposed human waste from an insanitary latrine</b>, open drain or pit or railway track. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Person could have been <b>employed by anyone in regular or contractual basis</b>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Exception:</b> Any person who has been employed to clean human waste and does so with the help of appropriate protective gear and equipment.</li> <li>● <b>Safal karamcharis are also considered as manual scavengers.</b> They refer to people working as sweepers or cleaning workers in municipalities, government or private organisations.</li> </ul>
<b>How does this law prevent manual scavenging?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● By <b>demolishing insanitary latrines or converting them into asanitary latrines</b>.</li> <li>● <b>Mandates local authorities to build and maintain</b> community sanitary latrines and make sure they are functional and hygienic.</li> </ul>
<b>Law makes it an offence to</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Employ people as manual scavengers</b> to clean insanitary latrines.</li> <li>● <b>Employ people to clean sewers</b> and septic tanks without protective gear.</li> <li>● <b>Construct insanitary latrines.</b></li> <li>● Not demolish or convert insanitary latrines within a certain period of this Act coming into force.</li> </ul>
<b>Rehabilitation of manual scavengers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Lays down rules and procedure for rehabilitation of manual scavengers</b> through training in alternate employment, financial help and help with purchasing property.</li> </ul>
<b>Responsibility for Identifying manual scavengers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Every local authority (municipality or panchayat), cantonment board or railway authority is responsible for surveying its area to identify manual scavengers.</li> </ul>

#### Initiatives taken to reduce Manual Scavenging

- **National Policy for mechanized Sanitation Eco-system** eliminate hazardous cleaning, stop deaths of sewer and septic tank workers and ensure their safety and dignity.
- Attempts to identify manual scavengers, including through **Swachhta mobile app**.
- **Self-Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS)** rehabilitate identified manual scavengers in alternative professions.

- **Under Swachhta Udyami Yojana**, concessional loans are provided for procurement of sanitation related equipments.
- **National Action for Mechanized Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE) scheme:** It promotes 100% mechanization, specially cleaning of sewers, septic tanks, desilting of drains, garbage lifting, sludge handling, solid and medical waste disposal etc.
  - It is a joint initiative of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA).

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## 4. EDUCATION

### 4.1. ANUSANDHAN NATIONAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION (NRF) ACT, 2023

#### Why in the News?

Parliament has enacted the **Anusandhan National Research Foundation (NRF) Act, 2023**.

#### Key highlights of the Act

- **Establish the Anusandhan NRF to -**
  - Provide strategic direction for research, innovation and entrepreneurship in the fields of
    - ✓ natural sciences, including mathematical sciences, engineering and technology, environmental and earth sciences, health and agriculture, and
    - ✓ scientific and technological interfaces of humanities and social sciences.
  - Promote, monitor and provide support as required for such research.
- **A Governing Board to provide strategic direction** to the Foundation and monitor implementation of the objectives of the Foundation.
  - It shall consist of
    - ✓ **President:** Prime Minister (ex-officio)
    - ✓ **Vice-Presidents:** Union Minister of Science & Technology & Union Minister of Education (ex-officio)
    - ✓ **Ex-officio Members:** Member from NITI Aayog dealing with Science & Technology, Secretary to Department of Science and Technology, Secretary to Department of Biotechnology, Secretary to Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, Secretary to Department of Higher Education
    - ✓ **Member Secretary:** Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India.
  - **President of Governing Board may nominate or appoint members** from Prime Minister's Science, Technology and Innovation Council, business organisation or industry, field of humanities and social sciences, institutions engaged in scientific and technological research and development, etc.
  - President of the Governing Board shall **constitute an Executive Council to implement the provisions of the Act**.
    - ✓ **Principal Scientific Advisor** to the Government of India is the **ex officio Chairperson** of the Council.



#### Objectives of NRF



**Seeding and facilitating research** at academic and research institutions



**Funding competitive peer-reviewed grant proposals** to eligible persons



**Assisting in setting up research infrastructure**



**Supporting translation of research undertaken** into capital-intensive technologies



**Analyse the expenditure on scientific research** and their outcomes



**Evolving participation in international collaborative** projects



**Encouraging the Public Sector Enterprises** and the private sector entities to invest in the activities of the Foundation

#### Government initiatives to boost R&D in India

- **Impacting Research Innovation and Technology (IMPRINT) India:** First-of-its-kind Pan-IIT and IISc joint initiative to bring forth public-private collaborative funding for research projects.
- **Fund for Improvement of S&T Infrastructure (FIST) Scheme:** Provide basic infrastructure and enabling facilities for promoting R&D activities.
- **Promotion of University Research and Scientific Excellence (PURSE):** DST initiative to strengthen the research capacity of performing Indian Universities.
- **SERB-POWER (Promoting Opportunities for Women in Exploratory Research):** Mitigate gender disparity in science and engineering research funding in Indian academic institutions.
- **National Research Foundation (NRF)** to foster a culture of R&D in India.

- **Department of Science and Technology (DST) will be the administrative Department of NRF.**
- **Funds for NRF**
  - **Foundation will be financed through:**
    - ✓ grants and loans from the central government,
    - ✓ donations to the fund,
    - ✓ income from investments of the amounts received by the Foundation, and
    - ✓ all amounts with the Fund for Science and Engineering Research set up under the 2008 Act.
  - **Governing Board shall constitute following Funds:**
    - ✓ **Anusandhan NRF Fund** for salaries, allowances, and administrative purposes.
    - ✓ **Innovation Fund** for funding outstanding creativity in the areas supported by the Foundation.
    - ✓ **Science and Engineering Research Fund** for the continuation of projects initiated under the SERB Act, 2008.
    - ✓ **One or more special-purpose funds** for any specific project or research.
- **Repealed Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) and subsumes it into NRF.**
  - **SERB was a statutory body** enacted under the SERB Act, 2008.
- **Anusandhan NRF is modelled on the US National Science Foundation (NSF).**

## 4.2. NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOL EDUCATION (NCF-SE)

### Why in the News?

**Ministry of Education** released NCF-SE, prepared by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).

### About National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE)

- Aims to positively transform the school education system of India through positive changes in curriculum, including **pedagogy**.
- It is the **curriculum framework for the 5+3+3+4 design of schooling** as proposed by the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020.
- **NCF-SE was last revised in 2005.**
- **The National Steering Committee**, under the chairmanship of **Prof. K Kasturirangan**, was formed to create a **curriculum aligned with the NEP 2020**.
  - NEP 2020 recommended the formulation of a new and comprehensive **NCF-SE** and **State Curriculum Frameworks (SCFs)**.

#### National Education Policy 2020

##### Aims

- Increase public investment to reach **6% of GDP** at the earliest.
- Increase GER to 100% in preschool to secondary level by **2030**, whereas GER in Higher Education, including vocational education, from 26.3% (2018) to **50% by 2035**.

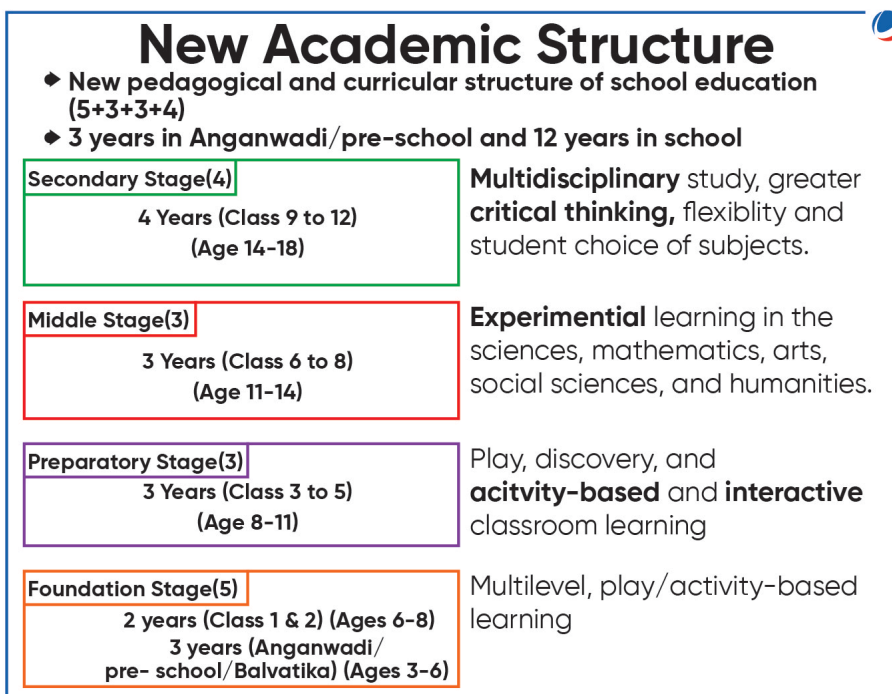
##### Features

- New Curricular and Pedagogical Structure (5+3+3+4)
- Ensuring **Universal Access at All** Levels of schooling from pre-primary school to Grade 12.
- **Setting up of a new National Assessment Centre, PARAKH** (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development).
- A separate **Gender Inclusion fund** and **Special Education Zones** for disadvantaged regions and groups.

### Key Highlights of NCF-SE

- **Curriculum framework:** NCF-SE designed it in a 5+3+3+4 (in terms of ages) for schooling in place of the present schooling structure of 4 stages.
  - **Existing four stages based on age groups:** Foundational Stage for ages 3-8, Preparatory Stage for ages 8-11, Middle Stage for ages 11-14, and Secondary Stage for ages 14-18.

- **Board examinations:** For Grades 10 and 12, all students will be allowed to take Board examinations **on at least two occasions** during any given school year, with only the best score being retained.
- **Pattern of study:** Move to a **semester design** instead of an annual exam.
- **Multilingualism and Indian Languages:** All students to be proficient in at least three languages, at least two of which should be native to India.
- **Flexibility and Choice at Secondary Stage:** No hard separations between academic and vocational subjects or between science, social science, art, and physical education.
- **Vocational Education:** Proposes engagement in three different forms of work – work with life forms (agriculture, animal husbandry), work with materials and machines, and work in human services.
- **Rooted in India:** Contributions to the knowledge in various disciplines by Indians from ancient to contemporary times have been integrated into the curricular goals.
- **Capacities for Scientific Inquiry:** Science Education emphasizes the development of capacities for scientific inquiry along with acquiring knowledge of fundamental theories, laws, etc.
- **Interdisciplinary Areas of Study:** As a separate subject of study at Secondary Stage.
- **Environmental Education:** At all stages of schooling, culminating in a separate area of study at Secondary Stage.



#### 4.2.1. PERFORMANCE GRADING INDEX (PGI) FOR SCHOOL EDUCATION SYSTEM

##### Why in the News?

Ministry of Education released two reports, **PGI 2.0 for States/UTs** and **PGI for Districts (PGI-D)**.

##### About PGI and PGI-D

- To assess performance of **school education system** at the State and District level.
  - Based on **Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+)** 2021-22 data and **National Achievement Survey (NAS) 2021**.
  - It has classified the States/UTs and districts into **ten grades** -
    - ✓ In **decreasing order of grades**- Daksh (highest grade), Utkarsh, Atti-Uttam, Uttam, Prachesta-1, 2 and 3, Akanshi-1, 2 and 3(Lowest grade).
- **PGI 2.0 for the year 2021-22**
  - PGI - States/UTs was first released for 2017-18.
  - **Major Highlights of Index**
    - ✓ **None of the States/UTs** attained the highest Grade (Daksh).
    - ✓ Top-most grade attained in PGI 2.0 is **Prachesta – 2** by 2 State/UTs - Punjab and Chandigarh.
    - ✓ **3 States** - Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Mizoram - are in **lowest grade Akanshi – 3**.
    - ✓ **Reduction in deviation** i.e. the deviation between the maximum and minimum scores obtained by States/UTs is **23.8%** of the maximum points in 2021-22, whereas this disparity was **51 %** in 2017-18.



- **PGI-D combined report for 2020-21 & 2021-22**
  - Focuses on **outcomes, effective classroom transaction, school safety**, etc.
  - **None of the districts** attained **top two grade** viz., Daksh and Utkarsh.

### 4.3. HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

#### Why in the News?

The **Parliamentary Standing Committee on education, women, children, youth, and sports** submitted report on **Implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020** in Higher Education.

#### Salient Features of NEP for Higher Education

- **Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER): At least 50% by 2035.**
  - GER measures **number of students enrolled in higher education** as a percentage of eligible population **aged 18 to 23 years**.
- **Multiple exit options**, the **Undergraduate degrees** will be of either **3 or 4-year duration**, with multiple exit options.
  - With a **certification** at end of first year, a **diploma** after second year, a **Bachelor's degree** after third year and an **Honours degree along with a Bachelor's degree** at the end of the fourth year.
  - **Academic Bank of Credit (ABC)** to digitally store the academic credits earned from various institutions.
- **Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs)** to be setup across the country to attain the highest standards for multidisciplinary education
- **National Research Foundation (NRF)** to catalyse and expand research and innovation across the country.
- **Internationalization of education** through institutional collaborations, and allowing entry of Top world Universities to open campuses in India.
- **National Educational Technology Forum (NETF)** to be established as a **platform for free exchange of ideas** on the use of technology to enhance learning, assessment and administration **both for schools and higher education**.

#### Status of Higher Education in India

- In **2021-22**, **Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)** in higher education for age group 18-23 years increased to 28.4 from 27.3 in 2020-21.
- **Female GER** increased to 28.5 in **2021-22** from 27.9 in 2020-21.

#### Goals of NEP, 2020 for Higher Education

	<b>At least one large multidisciplinary HEI</b> in or near every district by 2030.
	All HEIs shall aim to become <b>autonomous with an empowered Board of Governors</b> by 2035.
	All higher education institutions (HEIs) shall aim to become <b>multidisciplinary institutions</b> by 2040.
	<b>Increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio</b> in higher education including vocational education from <b>26.3% (2018) to 50% by 2035</b> .
	<b>By 2025, at least 50% of learners</b> through the school and higher education system shall <b>have exposure to vocational education</b> .

#### World University Rankings 2024

- The recent ranking by **Times Higher Education** included **1,904 universities across 108 countries**.
- **Around 91 Indian Universities** have found a place on the list (In 2023, it was 75).
- **University of Oxford (UK)** is listed as the **best University in the world**.
- **Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bangalore** placed in 201-250 bracket, **topped the list of Indian Universities**.
- **4 Indian universities** are placed in **501-600 bracket** (Anna University, Jamia Millia Islamia, Mahatma Gandhi University and Shoolini University).
- India is the **4th most well-represented nation** in the 2024 rankings (6th in 2023).

### Other Global Rankings

#### 'Global 2000' 2023 report

- Released by Centre for World University Rankings (CWUR) which rank over **2000 universities across the world**.
- 4 factors:** Quality of education (25%), employability (25%), quality of faculty (10%), and research performance (40%).
- India's performance:** 64 Indian universities feature on the list.

#### QS World University Ranking, 2024

- Released by QS (Quacquarelli Symonds).**
- Based on **indicators** taking into account **academic reputation, employer reputation, and faculty research**.
- IIT Bombay** was ranked at 149.

### 4.3.1. DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITIES (DTBU)

#### Why in the News?

Ministry of Education released **UGC (Institutions Deemed to be Universities) Regulations, 2023**.

#### More on News

- Supersedes UGC (Institutions Deemed to be Universities) Regulations 2019**, new regulations will encourage universities to **focus on quality & excellence, strengthen research ecosystem and transform higher education landscape**.

#### Salient features of new Regulations

- Less than 20 years old institutions** can now apply for DtbU status.
  - Previously, under **2019 Regulations**, higher educational institutions having '**existence for not less than 20 years**' were eligible for applying for the status.
- Cluster of institutions managed by more than one sponsoring body** can apply for **Deemed to be University (DtbU) status**.
- Institutions DtbU **may start new courses or programs in any field**, with **prior approval of its Executive Council** and, also wherever applicable, with **approval of relevant statutory council**.
- Institutions DtbU shall **compulsorily create Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) identities of their students** and upload their credit scores in digital lockers.
- About DtbU**
  - UGC Act 1956** provides for **Central Government to declare any institution other than a University to a status of Institution DtbU** under **Section 3**. Upon declaration, such institution shall be deemed to be a university.
- Recently, **NCERT has also been granted the status of DtbU** which will **allow it to -**
  - offer its own graduate, post-graduate and doctoral degrees**, and
  - have **autonomy in terms of introduction of programmes**, course structure, conducting examinations and management, among others.



- **NAAC 'A' grade with at least a 3.01 CGPA** for three consecutive cycles
- **NBA accreditation for two third of eligible programmes** for three consecutive cycles
- **In top 50 of any specific category of NIRF** (National Institutional Ranking Framework) for last three years continuously
- **In top 100 of overall NIRF Ranking** for last three years continuously



### 4.3.2. FOREIGN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN INDIA

#### Why in the News?

UGC [Setting up and Operation of Campuses of Foreign Higher Educational Institutions (FHEIs) in India] Regulations, 2023 released to facilitate entry of FHEIs into India, in line with National Education Policy (NEP), 2020.

### Key highlights of the regulation

- **Approval:** FHEIs require UGC's approval before establishment of Indian campuses, offer any programme, and discontinue any course or programme.
  - Cannot offer programmes contrary to the standards of higher education in India.
- **Eligibility:** FHEIs ranked within top 500 in global rankings (overall or subject-wise) or possessing outstanding expertise in a particular area.
- **Qualifications:** Qualifications awarded and quality of education in Indian campuses shall be equivalent to those awarded in their home jurisdiction.
  - FHEIs cannot offer programmes in online or in open and distance learning modes.
- **Autonomy:** Allowed to decide admission process and criteria, recruit faculty and staff, and decide a transparent and reasonable fee structure.
- **Restrictions:** FHEIs' Operation shall not be contrary to sovereignty and integrity of India, security of State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency, or morality.
  - For receiving donations from foreign source, FHEIs require prior permission of Central Government.
- **Audit:** FHEIs shall undergo a quality assurance audit and submit the report to UGC.
  - FHEIs shall submit an annual audit report to UGC certifying compliance with Foreign Exchange Management Act (1999), Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (2010), and other relevant laws.

### Significance of FHEIs in India



Increased access to quality education



Reduction in foreign exchange outflow



Improved research opportunities in India



Control of brain drain

## 4.4. NATIONAL CREDIT FRAMEWORK (NCRF)

### Why in the News?

University Grants Commission (UGC) released the National Credit Framework (NCrF) Report.

### Background of NCrF

- As per National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, Centre approved a High-Level Committee (2021) to develop a National Credit Accumulation and Transfer Framework for both General and Vocational Education and Training/skilling.
- NCrF has been jointly developed by a High-Level Committee with members from UGC, All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVT), NCERT, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, CBSE, etc.

### About National Credit Framework (NCrF)

- It is an inclusive single Meta Framework to seamlessly integrate credits earned through school education, higher education, and vocational & skill education.
- For creditization and integration of all learning, NCrF shall encompass the qualification frameworks for higher education, vocational & skill education, and school education, namely:
  - National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF),
  - National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF)
  - National Curriculum Framework (NCF)/ National School Education Qualification Framework (NSEQF).
- Seeks to integrate credits earned through school education, higher education and vocational & skill education to ensure flexibility and mobility among them.







- **Makes education more holistic by** enabling broad based, multi-disciplinary education across sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities and sports.

### Key Highlights of NCrF

- **Credit system:** It divides education into 8 levels where -
  - **Levels 1-4** refer to **School Education**;
  - **Levels 4.5-8** refers to **Higher education**;
  - **For Vocational education & training** from **level 1 to 8**.
  - Credits earned after the completion of academic education, vocational education, training & Skill education - **the collected credits will be stored in the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC)**.
- **Different means to earn Credit:**
  - By completing academic education,
  - By undergoing vocational education, training or skill programme,
  - By taking up experiential learning, such as relevant experience and proficiency levels acquired from industries.

## Benefits of NCrF

 <b>Students</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Flexibility in Learning</li> <li>› Multidisciplinary skillsets</li> <li>› Enables lifelong learning</li> <li>› Holistic development of personality</li> </ul>	 <b>Government</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Increased enrolment of students</li> <li>› More skilled work-force</li> <li>› Attract Investment across the globe</li> </ul>	 <b>Industry</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Skilled workforce</li> <li>› Reduction in training</li> <li>› Better efficiency of the workforce</li> <li>› Better innovation possibilities</li> </ul>	 <b>Institutions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Simpler and uniform Credit</li> <li>› More inflow of students from all age groups</li> <li>› More focus on research and innovation</li> </ul>
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- **Integration of earned Credits:** Through schools, colleges, vocational and skill education by encompassing the NHEQF, NSQF and NSEQF.
- **Multiple Entry and Exit Options:** To enables lifelong learning as credit transfer mechanism will enable students to enter, exit and re-enter the educational ecosystem at any point in time during their career.
- **Concept of Notional Learning Hours:** It refers to the time that an average student needs to attend all classes, appear for tests and submit assignments.
  - Total notional learning hours for school, college, vocational and skill education is **fixed at 1200 Hours/Year**.

## 4.5. ACCREDITATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

### Why in the News?

The Ministry of Education has accepted the proposed reforms in the accreditation system of Higher Educational Institutions, as recommended by Dr. K. Radhakrishnan Committee.

### More on news

- The **mandate** of the committee included:
  - **strengthening** the **assessment and accreditation** processes and
  - preparing a **road map for the National Accreditation Council (NAC)** envisioned in the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020.
- Also, the committee has suggested that the educational system should **make the transition to the proposed accreditation regime by December 2023** even if the **National Accreditation Council (NAC)** is set up later.

- NAC is one of the four verticals of the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI).
- It has been envisaged as the 'meta-accrediting body', with responsibility for overseeing and supervising an independent ecosystem of accrediting institutions.

#### About India's accreditation of HEIs


- Accreditation is the **assessment of the quality of education**.
- **University Grants Commission (UGC)** accords recognition to the HEIs under the provisions of '**UGC Act, 1956**'.
- **Multiple agencies** (at Union and State level) have been mandated for **periodic approvals, assessment, accreditation and ranking** of HEIs.

#### Key recommendations of the committee

- **Composite Assessment System (CAS):** Amalgamate **Programme Accreditation and Institution Accreditation**.
- **Binary Accreditation System:** Transition from the present 8-point grading system of NAAC to a Binary Accreditation System viz. **Accredited and Not Accredited**.
  - **Two sub- divisions in the Non-accredited category -**
    - ✓ **Awaiting Accreditation** (for those who are close to the threshold level);
    - ✓ **Not Accredited** (for those who are far below the standards for accreditation).
- **Maturity-Based Graded Accreditation:** To encourage accredited Institutions improve their quality and position themselves among global top institutions.

#### Accreditation of school
































- In India, there is **no mandate from the government on regular school evaluations**.
- **NEP 2020** visualizes an effective **quality self-regulation or accreditation system for all stages of education** including pre-school education.
  - It also recommends a **separate School Quality Assessment and Accreditation Framework** to be developed by State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs).
- **National Accreditation Board for Education and Training (NABET)** is offering an accreditation programme called '**Accreditation standard for Quality School Governance**'.
  - NABET is the **constituent Board of the Quality Council of India (QCI)**.
  - **The standard has three basic sections:**
    - ✓ School Governance
    - ✓ Educational and Support Processes
    - ✓ Performance Measurement & Improvement

 <p><b>Key accreditation systems in India</b></p>	<p><b>National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Set up in 1994, to facilitate the volunteering institutions to assess their performance.</li> <li>› The accreditation is valid for five years.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Launched in 2015 by the Ministry of Education.</li> <li>› Since 2018, it is mandatory for all government-run educational institutions to participate in the NIRF.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Set up in 1945 as an advisory body and later granted statutory status through AICTE Act 1987.</li> <li>› Grants approval for starting new technical institutions, for introduction of new courses and for variation in intake capacity in technical institutions.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>National Board of Accreditation (NBA)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Established by AICTE in 1994 and in 2013, it was made completely independent of AICTE.</li> <li>› Accredits programs offered by technical / professional institutions.</li> </ul>

## 4.6. OTHER IMPORTANT NEWS

India Rankings 2023 of HEIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministry of Education released 8<sup>th</sup> edition of <b>India Rankings of Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs)</b>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on <b>National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF)</b>.</li> <li><b>Five broad categories of parameters identified in NIRF includes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teaching; Learning and Resources; Research and Professional Practice; Graduation Outcome; Inclusivity and Outreach; and Perception.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li><b>2023 edition of India Rankings</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduced a new subject namely <b>Agriculture &amp; Allied Sectors</b></li> <li>Integrated “Innovation” ranking previously executed by <b>Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA)</b> into <b>India Rankings</b>.</li> <li>Expansion of scope of “Architecture” to “<b>Architecture and Planning</b>”.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>IIT Madras topped in Overall Category</b>, followed by <b>IISc Bangalore</b>.</li> <li>Rankings are based on <b>indicators</b> taking into account <b>academic reputation, employer reputation and faculty</b>.</li> </ul>
National Medical Commission (NMC) Gets WFME Recognition for 10 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>NMC</b> is India's regulatory <b>body overseeing medical education and practice</b>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is a <b>statutory body</b> under the <b>NMC Act, 2019</b>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) grants recognition Status to <b>individual accrediting agencies</b> that meet <b>WFME recognition criteria</b>.</li> <li><b>Benefits of recognition</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All the <b>706 existing medical colleges</b> in India will <b>become WFME accredited</b>.</li> <li><b>New medical colleges</b> that will be set up in the next <b>10 years will automatically</b> get accredited.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
National Nursing and Midwifery Commission (NNMC) Act, 2023 and National Dental Commission (NDC) Act, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>NNMC Act, 2023</b> and <b>NDC Act, 2023</b> have been enacted to improve quality education in <b>paramedical (including nurses and midwives)</b> and <b>dental sector</b>, respectively. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Acts are on the lines of National Medical Commission (NMC)</b>, to improve access to quality and affordable medical education.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>NDC Act 2023</b> seeks to repeal Dentists Act, 1948 and proposes to set up <b>National Dental Commission to regulate dental education and profession in country</b>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It provides <b>an exit test for dentists</b> on lines of <b>National Exit Test</b>.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>NNMC Act</b> seeks to repeal Indian Nursing Council Act, 1947. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It provides for establishment of <b>NNMC</b> to frame policies and regulate standards for governance of nursing and midwifery education and training.</li> <li>It will provide a <b>uniform mechanism for admission into nursing and midwifery institutions</b>.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Need of the Act</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>40% of districts</b> across India are <b>deprived of nursing colleges</b>.</li> <li><b>Nurse to population ratio is only 2.06:1000</b> against a global benchmark of 3:1000.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Vidya Samiksha Kendras (VSKs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministry of Education (MoE) asked states to <b>open VSKs under National Digital Education Architecture (NDEAR)</b>.</li> <li>VSKs aim to <b>leverage data and technology</b> to bring a leap in learning outcomes. It will act as a <b>data repository</b> which will have <b>data from all schemes run by MoE</b>.</li> <li>Currently, a <b>VSK centre is housed</b> in National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) campus.</li> <li><b>Objective of VSK</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Monitor real-time status of various projects/ activities</b> under ambit of Samagra Shiksha.</li> <li><b>Keep track of enrolled students</b> including <b>learning outcomes</b> from National Achievement Survey, <b>dropouts’ data</b>, etc.</li> <li><b>Setup centralized helpdesk for grievance redressal mechanism</b> for stakeholders of School ecosystem.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <b>Monitor and track field level academic and non-academic activities</b> at state level and empower administrators and teachers in the field to take data driven decisions.</li><li>○ NDEAR is under the aegis of <b>MoE in collaboration with Ministry of Electronic and Information Technology (MeitY).</b></li></ul>	<div><div></div><div><h3>Principles of National Digital Education Architecture</h3><table><tr><td> Address Open Access</td><td> Unifying not uniform</td></tr><tr><td> Leverage Investments</td><td> Ecosystem Driven</td></tr><tr><td> Privacy, Security and trust by design</td><td> Unbundled and Combinable</td></tr><tr><td> Provide Choice by design</td><td> Federated, but interoperable</td></tr><tr><td> Evolvable</td><td> Address Diversity, Inclusion and Special needs</td></tr></table></div></div>	 Address Open Access	 Unifying not uniform	 Leverage Investments	 Ecosystem Driven	 Privacy, Security and trust by design	 Unbundled and Combinable	 Provide Choice by design	 Federated, but interoperable	 Evolvable	 Address Diversity, Inclusion and Special needs
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 Evolvable	 Address Diversity, Inclusion and Special needs											
<b>National Syllabus and Teaching Learning Material Committee (NSTC)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>NCERT established a 19-member NSTC</b> to shape the curriculum and educational materials for students in grades 3rd to 12th.</li><li>● <b>About NSTC</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Tasked to ensure alignment of school syllabus, textbooks, teaching, and learning materials with the <b>National Curriculum Framework (NCF).</b></li><li>○ Assisted by '<b>Curricular Area Groups</b>' (CAGs) consisting of subject experts to develop textbooks.</li></ul></li><li>● Earlier <b>NCF for School Education, 2023</b>, recommended <b>major restructuring of school education.</b></li></ul>											

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## 5. HEALTH

### 5.1. NATIONAL FAMILY HEALTH SURVEY-5 (NFHS) REPORT

Key highlights of Survey (All India level)		
Indicator	NFHS-5 (2019-21)	NFHS-4 (2015-16)
<b>➤ Total Fertility Rates (TFR) (an average number of children per women)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ TFR of about 2.1 children per woman is called replacement-level fertility, considered essential to keep population growth in check.</li> </ul>	↓ 2.0	2.2
➤ <b>Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR)</b>	↑ 67%	54%
➤ <b>Antenatal care (ANC) visits</b> by pregnant women in their first trimester	↑ 70%	59%
➤ <b>Unmet needs of family planning</b>	↓ 9%	13%
➤ <b>Full immunization in kids aged 12-23 months</b>	↑ 76%	62%
<b>➤ Sex ratio of the total population (females per 1,000 males)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ This is the first time, in any NFHS or Census, that the sex ratio is skewed in favour of women.</li> </ul>	↑ 1020	991
<b>➤ Neonatal mortality rate</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Number of deaths among all live births during the first 28 days of life expressed per 1000 live births.</li> </ul>	↓ 24.9	29.5
<b>➤ Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Infant mortality is the death of an infant before his or her first birthday and Infant mortality rate is the number of infant deaths for every 1,000 live births.</li> </ul>	↓ 35.2	40.7
<b>➤ Under-five mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ It is the probability of a child born in a specific year or period dying before reaching the age of five.</li> </ul>	↓ 41.9	49.7
➤ <b>Anaemia among women aged 15-49 years</b>	↑ 57.7%	53.1%
➤ <b>Anaemia among Children aged 6-59 months</b>	↑ 67.1%	58.6%
➤ <b>Women age 20-24 years married before age 18 years (%)</b>	↓ 23.3%	26.8%
➤ <b>Men age 25-29 years married before age 21 years (%)</b>	↓ 17.7%	20.3%
➤ <b>Institutional births</b>	↑ 88.6%	78.9%
➤ <b>Children under 5 years who are stunted (height-for-age)</b>	↓ 35.5%	38.4%
➤ <b>Children under 5 years who are wasted (weight-for-height)</b>	↓ 19.3%	21%
➤ <b>Children under 5 years who are underweight (weight-for-age)</b>	↓ 32.1%	35.8%

## 5.2. UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE

### Why in the News?

Recently, **Tracking Universal Health Coverage: 2023 Global Monitoring report** was jointly released by **WHO** and **World Bank**.

### Universal Health Coverage

- **UHC** means that **all people have access to a full range of quality health services without financial hardship**.
  - It covers the **full continuum of essential health services**, from health promotion to prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and palliative care.
- **Key Dimensions of UHC:** Accessibility, Affordability, and Quality.

### Initiatives taken to achieve Universal Health Coverage

- **Ayushman Bharat Yojana** aims to undertake interventions to holistically address health at primary, secondary and tertiary level.
- **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)** to improve **equitable access to quality healthcare** by encouraging use of technologies such as telemedicine and enabling national portability of health services.
- **National Health Policy 2017** aims at achieving UHC and delivering quality health care services to all at affordable cost.
- **Intensified Mission Indradhanush** focusses on reaching **zero-dose children aged between 0 and 5 years** and pregnant women who might have missed any vaccine doses in the national immunisation schedule.

## 5.3. ANGANWADI SYSTEM

### Why in the News?

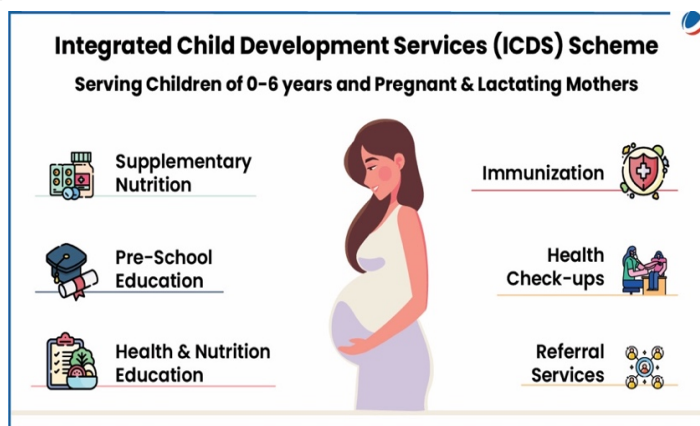
The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD) launched a national **Anganwadi Protocol for Divyang Children** to track and help children with disabilities.

### More on News

- Protocol embodies a **Social Model for Divyangjan** inclusive care under POSHAN Abhiyan, with a 3 step approach:
  - **Screening for early disability signs**
  - **Inclusion in community events and empowering families**
  - **Referral support via ASHA/ANM & Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) teams.**
- It is in line with **National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage 2022**.

### About Anganwadi system

- **Key features**
  - Anganwadi system, launched under **Anganwadi Services Scheme** (now renamed as **Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0**), is an integral part of **Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) scheme** (refer to infographics).
  - Anganwadi Services Scheme is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** under **MoWCD**.
- **Objective of Anganwadi Services Scheme**
  - **Improve nutritional and health status of children (0-6 years)**, pregnant women and lactating mothers, and
  - **Reduce incidences of mortality, morbidity and malnutrition.**
- **Status/Depth of Anganwadi system**
  - Stands as a global frontrunner in early childhood care, impacting lives of over 8 crore children daily through **Anganwadi Centres (AWCs)**, **Anganwadi Workers (AWWs)** and **Anganwadi Helpers (AWHs)**.





## Digital Inclusivity

- AWCs are **digitally strengthened** with smartphones for POSHAN tracking systems, and monitoring devices.
- '**Poshan Tracker**' is a **job-aid to the AWWs** for efficient delivery of services along with reflection of their efforts.
- This mobile based application is being leveraged for dynamic **identification of stunting, wasting, under-weight prevalence** among children and last mile tracking of nutrition service delivery.

## Compensation

- AWWs and AWHs are **paid fixed honorarium per month** as decided by Government from time to time.
  - ✓ Honorarium of AWWs by the Centre has been enhanced to **₹4500 per month**.
- AWWs are also allowed a **performance linked incentive of ₹ 500 per month** for using **ICDS-CAS under POSHAN Abhiyaan**.
  - ✓ ICDS-Common Application Software (CAS) facilitates the **capture of data by frontline functionaries**.
  - ✓ It's a six-tier **dashboard** that replaces registers with smartphones.
- Also, most of the **States/UTs are paying additional honorarium** to these functionaries from their own resources.
- Insurance coverage:** AWWs and AWHs been covered under:
  - ✓ Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima yojana (PMJJBY)
  - ✓ Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima yojana (PMSBY)
  - ✓ Anganwadi Karyakartri Bima yojana (AKBY)
- Other Benefits:** Paid leave, reservation in promotions, uniforms and other incentives and awards for rendering exemplary services.

## Saksham Anganwadis

- It is a **targeted intervention for improving AWCs**. They will be strengthened, upgraded and rejuvenated across the country for enhancing the overall efficiency and effectiveness.
- Apart from given goals for Anganwadi, **Saksham Anganwadis would additionally focus on-**
  - Adolescent Girls (14 to 18 years) in Aspirational Districts and North Eastern Region (NER).**
  - Early Childhood Care and Education (3-6 years) and early stimulation for (0-3 years).**
- Under it, **two lakh AWCs, 40,000 each year will be strengthened to make requisite upgrades.**
  - It will undertake activities like **smart learning aids, audio-and-video tools, water purifiers** and devices such as **rain-water harvesters**.

## About National Nutrition Mission (NNM) or POSHAN Abhiyan

- It was launched in 2017 to **monitor, supervise, fix targets and guide nutrition-related** interventions across the Ministries.
- The objective of POSHAN Abhiyaan is to **reduce stunting** in identified Districts of India with the highest malnutrition burden **by improving utilization of key Anganwadi Services**.
- It aims to ensure **holistic development and adequate nutrition** for pregnant women, mothers and children.

## Features of POSHAN Abhiyaan

	<b>Social audits</b> and involving masses through <b>jan andolan</b>		<b>Incentivizing states/UTs</b> for meeting the targets
	<b>Mapping of various schemes</b> contributing towards addressing malnutrition		<b>Incentivizing AWWs</b> for using <b>IT based tools</b> and eliminating registers used by AWWs
	Introducing a very <b>robust convergence mechanism</b>		Introducing <b>measurement of height of children</b> at the AWCs
	ICT based <b>real time monitoring</b> system		Setting-up <b>nutrition resource centres</b>

Community health workers at grassroots			
Specification	Anganwadi workers (AWW)	Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM)	Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA)
Scheme	ICDS under MoWCD	National Rural/Urban Health Mission (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoH&FW))	
Based at	Anganwadi center	Health sub-center and additionally visits villages also	Village level
Key roles	Providing early childhood care and development of beneficiaries	Focuses on promotion of Maternal and Child Health, including immunizations and institutional-based deliveries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create awareness on factors that determine health status.</li> <li>• Counsel women, families, and adolescents on birth preparedness.</li> <li>• Curative care and supplies.</li> </ul>
Incentives	Honorarium as decided by Centre and performance linked incentive.	Honorarium as decided by Centre.	Receive task/ activity based incentives in addition to fixed monthly incentive of ₹2000 per month for routine and recurring activities.

## 5.4. WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)

### Why in the News?

Recently, World Health Organization (WHO) released a report ‘Burden of disease attributable to unsafe drinking-water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)’.

### About WASH

- WASH is a collective term for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene relating to **Access to safe drinking water, Improved sanitation facilities and maintaining basic level of hygiene.**
- **SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation)** aims to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
- Report stated that in 2019, use of safe WASH services could have prevented **2.5% of all deaths** and **2.9% of all Disability-Adjusted Life years (DALYs)** globally.
- **Current Status of India, as per UNICEF**
  - Number of **people defecating in open in India has reduced** significantly by an estimated 450 million people.
  - Inadequate WASH services in health facilities **contributes to high neonatal mortality rate**, which is currently **around 24 deaths per 1000 live births.**
- UNICEF released a report titled ‘**Triple Threat Report**’ which examined “**triple burden**” of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) related threats faced by children.
  - **Triple threat/burden defined as**
    - **Less than 50% access to at least basic water** or sanitation services.
    - Within **top 20 countries**, highest burden of deaths attributable to **unsafe WASH among children under 5.**
    - Within **top 25% of countries** facing **highest risk of climate and environmental hazards** in UNICEF’s Children’s Climate Risk Index (CCRI).



## India's Initiatives for WASH



**Water-related:** Water Quality Management Information System (WQMIS); Jal Jeevan Mission; Namami Gange Programme.



**Sanitation:** Swachh Bharat Mission – Grameen (SBM-G); Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U).



**Hygiene:** Promotion of Menstrual Hygiene among adolescent girls.



**Rural and Urban related:** Rural WASH Partners' Forum (RWPF); Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT).



## Global Initiatives for WASH



**WHO WASH Strategy, 2018-25.**



**UNICEF Strategy for WASH 2016-2030:** Its purpose is to achieve SDG-6 by 2030.



**UN Sanitation and Hygiene Fund (SHF):** Launched in 2020 to provide accelerated funding to countries with the heaviest disease burden.



**Sanitation and Water for All (SWA):** Hosted by UNICEF, it is a global partnership of governments, civil society organizations that coordinates on improved accountability and resource allocation.



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## 6. NUTRITION AND SANITATION

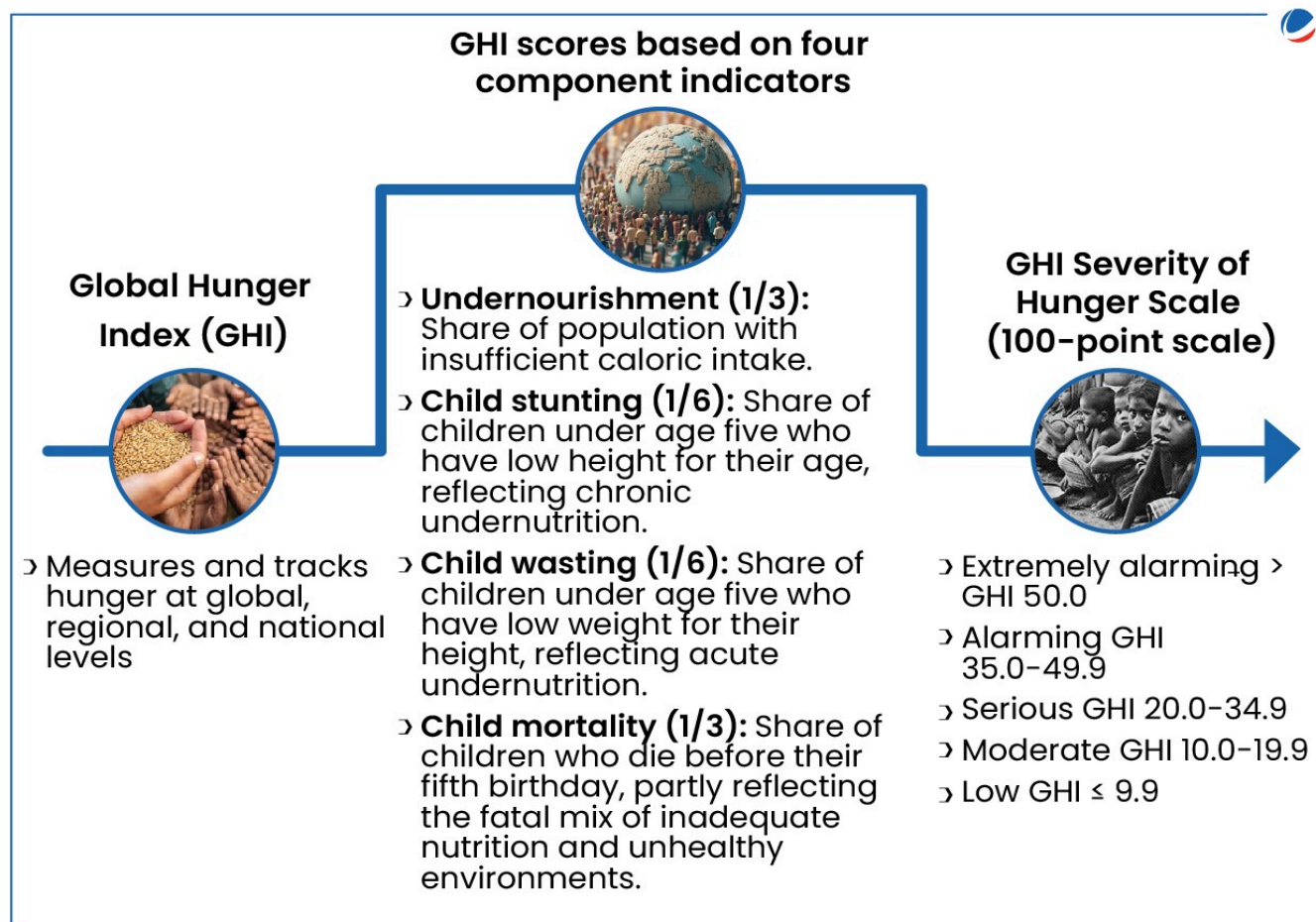
### 6.1. GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX (GHI)

#### Why in the News?

Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2023 is released by **Concern Worldwide** and **Welt Hunger Hilfe**, Non-Government Organisations from Ireland and Germany respectively.

#### Key findings of the GHI

- **Global trends**
  - Since 2015, **little progress** has been made in reducing hunger reflecting the combined effects of several crises including the **COVID-19 pandemic**, the **Russia-Ukraine war**, the **impacts of climate change**, etc.
  - **South Asia** and **Africa South of the Sahara** are the world regions with the **highest hunger levels**, with GHI scores of 27.0 each.
- **India related findings (GHI, 2023)**
  - India is **ranked 111<sup>th</sup>** among 125 countries with a **GHI score of 28.7** and is categorized as **Serious on the GHI Severity of Hunger Scale**.
    - ✓ It marks a **slight improvement in India's GHI score of 29.2** recorded in **2015**.
  - **Undernourishment (16.6%)**, **Child Stunting (35.5%)**, **Child Wasting (18.7%)**, and **Child Mortality (3.1%)**.
- The government of India raised objections over GHI due to **methodological issues, inadequate sample size, and inappropriate sources of data**.



## 6.2. OPEN DEFCATION FREE (ODF) STATUS

### Why in the News?

Till September 2023, **75% Indian Villages** achieved **ODF Plus** status under **Phase-II of the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen)**.

### About ODF Status

- **ODF** is the **termination of faecal-oral transmission**, defined by –
  - **No visible faeces found in the environment/ village;** and
  - **Every household as well as public/ community institutions using safe technology option for disposal of faeces.**
- **ODF Plus village** is one which has **sustained its ODF status** along with implementing either **solid or liquid waste management systems**.
- **ODF Plus Model village** is one which is **sustaining ODF status** and
  - has **arrangements for both Solid Waste Management and Liquid Waste Management;** and
  - **observes visual cleanliness**, i.e., minimal litter, minimal stagnant wastewater, no plastic waste dump in public places; and
  - displays **ODF Plus Information, Education & Communication (IEC)** messages.

### ODF definitions for Urban areas



#### ODF

A city/ ward can be notified/ declared as ODF if, at any point of the day, **not a single person is found defecating in the open**



#### ODF Plus (+)

A city/ ward can be notified ODF+ if, it was **declared as ODF, AND all community and public toilets are functional** and well maintained.



#### ODF Plus Plus (++)

A city/ ward can be notified as ODF++ if, it was **declared ODF+, and entire faecal sludge/ septage and sewage is safely managed and treated**, with no discharging and/or dumping of untreated faecal sludge/ septage and sewage in drains, water bodies or open areas.



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Current affairs forms the cornerstone of civil services exam preparation, permeating all its phases - **Prelims, Mains, and the Interview**. Staying updated with current affairs equips aspirants to navigate the evolving landscape of the civil services exam. With the right resources and approach, candidates can transform this vast section into a strong advantage.

## What is PT 365?

PT 365 document comprehensively covers the important and relevant current affairs of the last 1 year in a consolidated manner to aid Prelims preparation. It is devised as a revision document of the current affairs.

### Features of PT365



#### Comprehensive Coverage

- Entire year's current affairs coverage.
- UPSC relevant subjects like Polity, Economy, S&T, Environment, IR, etc.
- Emphasis on topics likely to appear in upcoming prelims exam.



#### Clear and Concise Information

- Clear, concise presentation focusing on key issues.
- Information from credible sources.
- Appendices for rapid revision.



#### QR based Smart quiz

- Interactive feature to assess aspirant's learning and comprehension.



#### Infographics

- Aids in understanding and retention.
- Techniques, methods, and processes displayed.
- Strategic use of maps to enhance learning.



#### Government Schemes and Policies

- In-depth coverage of key government schemes, policies, and initiatives.



#### New Elements

- Tailored to reflect the pattern of previous year's questions.



Scan this QR code  
to watch video

## Significance of PT 365



**Ease of Revision:** Content categorisation is based on subjects or topics to make it easier for aspirants to locate and revise specific areas



**Value Addition:** Includes infographics, related developments, or news, ensuring comprehensive coverage of important information.



**Crisp Material:** Crisp points have been used in the articles. It allows aspirants to easily do multiple revisions in limited span of time.



**Integrated Approach:** Covers basic concepts and information of all current affairs in a lucid manner, in line with previous trends of UPSC questions. Also helps in integrating key current affairs with static knowledge.



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PT 365 is a time and tested document. In the previous years, it has helped lakhs of candidates to cover current affairs in a holistic way. It's impactful features make it easier for aspirants to understand current affairs and excel in the UPSC Civil Services examination.



## 7. ORGANIZATIONS IN NEWS

### 7.1. UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND (UNFPA)

#### Why in the News?

UNFPA released **India Ageing Report 2023**, in collaboration with International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS).

#### About UNFPA

- **Established as a trust fund in 1967** and began operations in 1969.
- **Headquarter:** New York (US)
- **Subsidiary organ of the UN General Assembly.**
- Receives policy guidance from **UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).**
- **Mandate:** To ensure sexual and reproductive rights and choices for all, especially women and young people.
  - Guided by **1994 Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).**
- **Key Targets:** Achieve **three zeros**, by 2030 -
  - Ending unmet need for family planning.
  - Ending preventable maternal death.
  - Ending gender-based violence and harmful practices.
- **Other Key Information**
  - Collaborates with other development and humanitarian agencies, particularly WHO, UNICEF, UNDP and UNAIDS.
  - **Reports by UNFPA:** **State of World Population report.**

#### State of World Population Report 2023: 8 Billion Lives Infinite Possibilities

- **Annual report on** developments and trends in world population and demographics.
- **Key findings with respect to India**
  - **Most populous country:** By mid-2023, **India's population (1428.6 mn) is set to cross China (1425.7 mn).**
  - **One of the Youngest Countries:** Around **68% of India's population is of the age group 15-64 years** and around **26% of the population fall between 10-24 years.**
  - **Old age population:** Currently, **7% of the Indian population is above 65 years.**
  - **Fertility rate:** **Total Fertility rate currently stands at 2.0**, down from 2.2 in 2015-16.
  - **Life expectancy:** Average life expectancy of an **Indian male is 71 years** and that of **Indian female is 74 years.**
- **Other Key findings**
  - **The Global life expectancy reached 72.8 years in 2019** and expected to reach **77.2 years by 2050.**
  - **Migration is predicted to be the sole driver of population growth in many high income countries.**
  - **Eight countries** namely Egypt, Ethiopia, **India**, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Tanzania, Democratic Republic of Congo are **set to provide more than 50% of the projected global population by 2050.**

### 7.2. UN DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS (UNDESA)

#### Why in the News?

UNDESA released **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Progress Report 2023: Special Edition.**

#### About UNDESA

- Its genesis is rooted in **UN Charter.**
- **Headquarter:** New York (US)
- Guided by **transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.**

- Works closely with governments and stakeholders **to help countries meet their economic, social, and environmental goals.**
- **Other reports:** Population and Vital Statistics Report, World Youth Report, World Social Report, World Economic Situation and Prospects Report, etc.

#### Key highlights of the report

- Progress on **more than 50% of targets of SDGs is weak; on 30 %, it has stalled** or gone into reverse.
- **COVID-19 pandemic** and triple crises of **climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution** are having a lasting impact.
- **By 2030, some 84 million children will be out of school** and 300 million children or young people attending school will be unable to read and write.
- Under current trends, **575 million people** will still live in **extreme poverty in 2030.**

### 7.3. UN COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT (UNCPD)

#### Why in the News?

56<sup>th</sup> session of the UNCPD was held in New York.

#### About UNCPD

- **Genesis: A Population Commission** was established by the **UN Economic and Social Council (UNECOSOC)** in 1946.
  - Commission was **renamed as UNCPD** in 1994.
- **Headquarter:** New York (US)
- **Membership: 47 Member States** elected by the **UNECOSOC** for a period of **4 years** on the basis of **geographic distribution.**
  - **Currently, India is a member, till 2025.**
- **Functions:** Monitor, review and assess the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development at the national, regional and international levels and advise the Council thereon.

### 7.4. UN COMMITTEE ON RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (UNCRC)

#### Why in the News?

For the first time, UNCRC issued guidance on children's right to live in a clean, healthy and sustainable environment

#### About UNCRC

- **Body of 18 independent experts** that monitors implementation of **UN Convention on Rights of Children** by its **States parties.**
  - Convention, adopted in **1989**, outlines children's rights, including to life, health, clean drinking water, and survival and development.
  - It is ratified by **196 state parties (including India).**
- **All States parties are obliged to submit regular reports to UNCRC** on implementation of the Convention.
- It **also considers individual complaints** alleging violations of Convention on Rights of the Child.
- Committee **meets in Geneva** and normally **holds three sessions per year.**

### 7.5. WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME (WFP)

#### Why in the News?

**World Food Programme** has received funding half of the operating requirement in 2023.

#### About WFP

- **Joint program of the UN and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO),** founded in **1961.**

- **Headquarter:** Rome (Italy)
- **Presence in over 120 countries** and territories, including India, to bring life-saving food to people displaced by conflict and made destitute by disasters.
- **Funding:** Voluntary donations from governments, corporates, and private donors.
- Awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace, 2020 for efforts to combat hunger.
- Reports by WFP: **Global Report on Food Crisis.**
- **WFP in India**
  - Functioning in India since 1963.
  - **Transforming Targeted Public Distribution System:** Piloting innovative solutions such as 'Annapurta', automatic grain dispensers-ATMs for rice.
  - **Fortification of government distributed food:** Pioneering multi-micronutrient fortification of school meals under Mid-day Meal program.
  - **Food insecurity mapping and monitoring:** Supporting government's Poverty and Human Development Monitoring Agency in establishing State-level Food Security Analysis Units.

## 7.6. INTERNATIONAL FOOD POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE (IFPRI)

### Why in the News?

IFPRI released the **Global Food Policy Report 2023: Rethinking food crisis responses.**

### About IFPRI

- **Established in 1975**, it is a major research centre of Consultative Group on International Agriculture Research (CGIAR).
  - **CGIAR is a global partnership established in 1971** as a unified international organization engaged in research for a food secured future.
- **Headquarter:** Washington, DC (US)
- **Works in over 60 countries**, including India.
- Provides **research-based policy solutions** for reducing poverty, hunger, and malnutrition.

### Key Highlights of the report

- **Food insecurity:** Food insecurity has risen during 2020-2022 due to multiple crises such as COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, natural disasters, civil unrest and political instability.
  - **With climate change, as many as 72 million more people** will be undernourished by 2050.
- **Surge in Food Prices in 2021-22:** Due to supply bottlenecks of COVID-19 and Russia-Ukraine war, with basic food basket prices increasing by at least 10% in many countries.

## 7.7. UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR)

### Why in the News?

UNHCR released a report titled '**Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2022 Report**'.

### About UNHCR

- Established by the **UN General Assembly in 1950.**
- **Headquarter:** Geneva (Switzerland)
- **Works in 137 countries**, including India.
- Dedicated to **save lives, protect rights**, and **build a better future for people** forced to flee their homes because of **conflict and persecution.**
- Works with countries to improve and monitor refugees and asylum laws and policies, to uphold human rights.
- **1951 Refugee Convention** and its **1967 Protocol** are key legal documents that form basis of UNHCR's work.



- **Key highlights of the report**
  - Around **108.4 million people** were forcibly displaced worldwide due to fear of persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations.
    - ✓ Forced migration **due to social and climate crises in 2022 was 21% higher than 2021.**
    - ✓ 30% of forcefully displaced were children.
  - **76 % of the world's refugees** are hosted by **Low- and middle-income countries.**
  - Around **4.4 mn people** are **stateless** or of undetermined nationality, 2% more than that of 2021.
  - **6 million displaced people** returned to their areas or countries of origin in 2022.

## 7.8. GLOBAL ALLIANCE OF NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS (GANHRI)

### Why in the News?

**GANHRI deferred** accreditation of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).

### More on News

- **For the second time** in a row, **GANHRI deferred accreditation of NHRC** citing objections like **political interference in appointments, involving police in probes** into human rights violations, **poor cooperation with civil society** etc.
  - **Without the accreditation**, NHRC will be **unable to represent India at UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC).**

### About GANHRI

- Established in 1993 as **International Coordinating Committee** of National Institutions for promotion and protection of human rights.
- **Headquarter:** Geneva (Switzerland)
- **Membership: 120 National Human Resource Institutions**, including India's NHRC.
- **General Assembly** is GANHRI's **supreme deliberative body.**
- **Responsible for reviewing and accrediting** National Human Rights Institutions (NHRI) **in compliance with Paris Principles** every five years.
  - Paris Principles, **adopted in 1993** by U.N. General Assembly, helps in **development of standards for NHRI** across the world.

 <b>Criteria for National Human Rights Institutions under Paris Principles</b>	
	<b>Broad mandate</b> , to promote and protect all human rights
	<b>Broad functions</b> , to deliver on their mandate by providing advice, reporting and monitoring, etc.
	<b>Independence from government</b> , set out in legislation or Constitution
	<b>Pluralism</b> , to ensure that the composition of NHRIs reflects the "social forces involved in the promotion and protection of human rights"
	<b>Adequate powers</b> , to initiate inquiries and investigations
	<b>Adequate resources</b> , for funding, staffing, infrastructure and institutional capacity
	<b>Cooperative work</b> , to collaborate with other State institutions, NGOs and civil society groups
	<b>International engagement</b> , to contribute their knowledge and expertise to international and regional human rights bodies

### Accreditation of NHRC

- In 2016 too, **NHRC's accreditation was deferred** by a year and later in **its recommendations in 2017 GANHRI asked the NHRC to address its lack of diversity** (regarding women representatives from other marginalized social groups).
  - An **amendment to Protection of Human Rights Act** in 2019 **sought to address these concerns.**
  - It **increased members of NHRC** and **made chairpersons** of National Commission for Backward Classes and National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, and Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities **deemed members of NHRC.**

## 7.9. UN PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES (UNPFII)

### Why in the News?

22<sup>nd</sup> session of the UNPFII was held.

### About UNPFII

- **Genesis:** Established in July 2000 by a Resolution of **UN Economic and Social Council (UNECOSOC)**.
  - It is a **High- level advisory body to the UNECOSOC**.
- **Headquarter:** New York (US)
- **Membership:** 16 independent experts, functioning in their personal capacity, who serve for a term of 3 years.
  - **8 experts are nominated by governments and 8 are nominated directly by indigenous organizations** in their regions.
  - Experts nominated by governments are **elected by ECOSOC** based on the **5 regional groupings of States** – Africa; Asia; Eastern Europe; Latin America and the Caribbean; and Western Europe and Other States.
- **Mandate:** To deal with indigenous issues related to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights.
- Its activities are supported by **Trust Fund on Indigenous Issues**.
- It is one of 3 UN bodies mandated to deal specifically with Indigenous Peoples' issues.
  - Others two are - **Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples** and **Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples**.

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## 8. MISCELLANEOUS

### 8.1. SPORTS GOVERNANCE IN INDIA

#### Why in the News?

Recently, Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports suspended the Wrestling Federation of India on grounds of disregard for existing rules and regulations.

#### Sports Governance in India

- Sports in India are **listed in Entry 33, List II (State List) of the constitution** and are necessarily under the domain of the federal states.
- Current Sports Governance Model in India**
  - Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports (MYAS)** has institutions like the Sports Authority of India (SAI) and other institutions working towards promoting sports training under SAI.
  - Indian Olympic Association (IOA)** has State Olympic Associations (SOAs) and National and State Sports Federations (NSFs and SFs).
  - For **non-Olympic sports** (cricket), federations like the **Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)** are directly affiliated with their respective international boards.

#### Key Requirements for National Sports Federations (National Sports Development Code of India, 2011)



##### Legal Status

Must be **voluntary registered** body rather than proprietary concern or a partnership firm



##### Age and Tenure Limit

Comply with **age and tenure limit of 70 years** for all office bearers with tenure regulation. e.g., 12 years for President with or without break



##### Status & Recognition

Must be **apex body for relevant sports** and recognition from relevant International or Asian Federation and IOA



##### Sportsperson Representation

Include **prominent sportspersons** as members in the organization



##### Internal Requirements

Must have a written constitution, **more than 3 years of existence**, and affiliated units in at least 2/3rd of states/ UTs



##### Office and Accounts

Must have an **office in Delhi** and maintain proper accounts of all annual financial statements



##### Elections

Must conduct **fair, transparent**, and democratic elections



##### Others

Impartial and transparent selection process; regular doping tests of all players; prevent age frauds; comply with RTI, etc



## 8.2. CASTE CENSUS

### Why in the News?

The state government of Bihar recently released a report on the caste survey conducted in the state, after a resolution passed by the state legislature for the same.

### More on News

- The State government of Bihar said that the exercise was **not a full-scale census**, but a “social survey” focused on caste demographics.

### History of Caste census in India

- Caste-wise enumeration of the population was **introduced under the British colonial administration in 1881** and **continued till the 1931 census**.
- In **1941**, the caste-based data was **collected, but not published**.
- After independence**, the Government of India **abandoned full caste enumeration**, except for **Scheduled Castes (SCs)** and **Scheduled Tribes (STs)**.
- Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC), 2011** was conducted through
  - Ministry of Rural Development, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India, and State Governments/UT Administrations.
  - In 2016, the **SECC data, excluding caste data**, was finalized and published.

### Census in India

- Census is a **Union subject** (entry 69 of the union list under **Schedule VII**) under **Article 246** of the constitution.
- The **Census Act, of 1948** provides a plan for conducting a population census along with the duties and responsibilities of census officers.
- Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India**, under the **Ministry of Home Affairs**, is entrusted with the responsibility of conducting decadal census.
- Later, this office was also entrusted with the task of implementation of the **Birth and Death Registration Act, 1969**.
- Second Backward Classes Commission** (Mandal Commission, 1980) **estimated the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) population at 52%**.

## 8.3. NATIONAL INDICATOR FRAMEWORK (NIF) FOR SDGS

### Why in the News?

**Union Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)** released Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) National Indicator Framework (NIF) Progress Report 2023.

### About National Indicator Framework (NIF)

- NIF** includes indicators that **align with the SDGs global indicators** and also includes indicators which are **tailored to suit India's specific requirements**.
- NIF**, similar to **Global Indicator Framework (GIF)**, is **evolving in nature**. At present, there are **284 indicators in the NIF, 2023**.
- In 2019, the Ministry has developed and circulated Guidelines to the States/UTs for development of **State Indicator Framework (SIF)** in respective States/UTs.

### Global Indicator Framework (GIF)

- Framed by the **Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs)**.
  - IAEG-SDGs composed of **Member States**, including regional and international agencies as observers.
  - Set up by UN Statistical Commission (UNSC)**.
  - India**, through MoSPI, **represented Southern Asia in IAEG-SDGs** for the term **2021-2023**.
  - India was also a **member of IAEG-SDGs** during 2015-2017 and 2017-2019 **for two consecutive terms**.
- At present, GIF includes **248 indicators, with 231 unique indicators**.
  - National statistical agencies** and other relevant institutions are responsible for **collecting data and reporting on these indicators**.
  - Towards this endeavor **MoSPI** developed a **National Indicator Framework (NIF) in 2018**.

## 8.4. OTHER IMPORTANT NEWS

<b>Global Gender Gap Index</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Released annually by <b>World Economic Forum</b>.</li> <li><b>4 Parameters:</b> Economic Participation and Opportunity; Educational Attainment; Health and Survival; Political Empowerment.</li> <li><b>India was ranked at 127 out of 146</b> countries in <b>2023</b>.</li> <li>India has achieved <b>44.4% representation of women in local governance</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Gender Social Norms Index</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Released by <b>United Nations Development Programme</b>.</li> <li>It seeks to comprehend the systematic disadvantages and discrimination faced by girls and women worldwide.</li> <li><b>4 Dimensions:</b> Political, Educational, Economic and Physical integrity.</li> </ul>
<b>UHC Service Coverage Index (SCI)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WHO and World Bank released Universal Health Coverage (UHC) SCI.</li> <li>SCI tracks SDG 3.8.1, <b>includes four indicator categories</b> - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reproductive, maternal and newborn and child health,</li> <li>Infectious diseases,</li> <li>Non-communicable diseases and</li> <li>Service capacity and access.</li> </ul> </li> <li>It is measured on a <b>scale from 0 (worst) to 100 (best)</b>.</li> <li>In 2021, <b>India's score declined to 63 from 64 in 2019</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Path to Equal Report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jointly prepared by <b>UN Women and UNDP</b>.</li> <li>Introduced <b>twin indices</b> to measure status of women's empowerment and gender equality across the world – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Women's Empowerment Index (WEI):</b> Focuses solely on women, measuring their power and freedoms to make choices and seize opportunities in life.</li> <li><b>Global Gender Parity Index (GGPI):</b> Evaluates the status of women relative to men in core dimensions of human development and exposes gaps in parity between women and men.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Technical Term Dictionaries for Indian Languages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commission for Scientific and Technical Terminology (CSTT) is working on technical and scientific terminology in <b>10 Indian Languages, underrepresented in learning landscape</b>.</li> <li>These languages, which are <b>also part of Eighth Schedule</b>, include Bodo, Santhali, Dogri, Kashmiri, Konkani, Nepali, Manipuri, Sindhi, Maithili, and Sanskrit.</li> <li><b>About CSTT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Established in 1961</b> through a <b>Presidential Order</b>.</li> <li>Commission was <b>established under Article 344(4)</b> of the Constitution of India <b>as a follow up of recommendations of a Committee</b>.</li> <li><b>Objective:</b> To evolve technical terminology in all Indian Languages.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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# UPSC TOPPERS PREPARATION APPROACH & STRATEGIES

*Insights from Toppers' Talk and Answer Scripts*



**Ishita Kishore**  
**Rank 1, 2022**

Ishita Kishore, the UPSC topper of 2022, serves as a remarkable inspiration for her unwavering determination and relentless efforts making her as a beacon of motivation for aspiring candidates. Through her methodical preparation approach, she emerged triumphant in the esteemed Civil Services Examination securing top rank. Ishita extensively relied on VisionIAS Mains test series to refine her answer writing abilities. To gain further insights into Ishita's answer writing approaches, kindly scan the QR code provided.

**TOPPER'S COPIES**



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# UPSC CSE TOPPERS 2022



**Waseem  
Ahmad Bhat**

**7**  
RANK  
2022

Waseem Ahmad Bhat, an exceptional achiever who secured an All India Rank 7 in his third attempt in the UPSC Civil Services Examination 2022. He also achieved All India Rank 225 in his first attempt in 2020 and currently, he is training as an Assistant Commissioner Income Tax.

Waseem was a student of the **VisionIAS Foundation Course**, Batch in 2019.

Hailing from Doru Shahabad, Anantnag, Jammu & Kashmir, he completed his schooling in Anantnag and holds a degree in Civil Engineering from NIT Srinagar.

Waseem opted for **Anthropology** as his optional subject. His topper's talk covers vital topics such as preparing for the **changing pattern of Prelims**, essay writing and strategy, writing **quote-based essays**, utilizing topper's answer scripts for preparation, and **effective revision strategies**.

TOPPERS' TALK



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**Aniruddh  
Yadav**

**8**  
RANK  
2022

Aniruddh Yadav, a remarkable achiever who secured an All India Rank 8 in his fourth attempt in the UPSC Civil Services Examination of 2022.

Aniruddh opted for **Anthropology** as his optional subject. He completed his dual degree course in Biochemical Engineering & Biotechnology from IIT Delhi.

His topper's talk covers crucial aspects such as **creating a schedule** and **subject-wise timetable**, honing answer writing skills through topic-based **practice**, **mastering the structure** and format of answers (Introduction, Body, Conclusion), **managing time effectively** during answer writing practice, and preparing **topic-wise notes** with the help of syllabus analysis and previous year questions.

TOPPERS' TALK



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**Siddharth  
Shukla**

**18**  
RANK  
2022

Siddharth Shukla, belongs to Uttar Pradesh. He completed his BA in History (H) from Delhi University, which was also his optional subject.

He displayed exemplary resilience by appearing in the exam for the fourth attempt and secured AIR 18 in 2022.

The preparation strategy reflected in his talk and answer scripts include the strategy for Essay, **efficient use of PYQs**, **notes making**, among others.

Additionally, he has also focused upon **non-academic aspects** such as **stress management**, **habit formation**, and **role of meditation** which are critical for this examination.

TOPPERS' TALK



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**Anoushka  
Sharma**

**20**  
RANK  
2022

Anoushka Sharma hailing from Madhya Pradesh completed her graduation from City University, New York with a bachelor's degree in Economics. She gained job experience through a three-month internship with the United Nations prior to taking the civil service examination.

She passed her CSE with AIR 20 in 2022 on her third attempt. **Economics** is her optional subject.

She has a very good command over ethics paper and she has shared her **insights on time management and strategy for attempting questions** in CSE Mains.

TOPPERS' TALK



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# UPSC CSE TOPPERS 2021



**Gamini Singla**

**3**  
RANK  
2021

Gamini Singla, hailing from Punjab, completed her graduation in Computer Science Engineering from Punjab Engineering College Chandigarh. Thereafter, she honed her skills through a five-month internship as a finance analyst at JP Morgan.

She secured a remarkable All India Rank of 3 in the UPSC CSE 2021 in her second attempt with **Sociology** as her optional subject.

With her strategic **approach to GS Paper IV (Ethics) and Essay**, Gamini demonstrated her ability to **critically analyze ethical issues** and effectively express her thoughts in a coherent manner.

Her expertise in answer writing provided her with a competitive edge, allowing her to convey her knowledge and insights concisely.

TOPPERS' TALK



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**Aishwarya Verma**

**4**  
RANK  
2021

Aishwarya Verma hails from Madhya Pradesh. After graduating in Electrical Engineering, he opted for Civil Services as a career of choice.

He chose **Geography** as his optional subject and achieved an All-India Rank 4 in UPSC CSE 2021 in his fourth attempt.

Apart from the hard work, determination and resilience shown by Aishwarya, his success can also be attributed to his **short and enriched self-made notes, advanced answer writing skills**, and smart preparation strategy, including S&T.

TOPPERS' TALK



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**Utkarsh Dwivedi**

**5**  
RANK  
2021

Utkarsh Dwivedi, hailing from historic town of Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, a graduate in Mechanical Engineering from VIT Vellore, displayed resilience by attempting the exam for the third time and succeeding with remarkable achievement with the optional subject, **Political Science and International Relations**.

He displayed **exemplary command over Ethics Paper**, specially Case Studies and quotation-based questions. With his deep understanding of the demand of the UPSC Examination and excellent time management skills, he not only optimized his efforts, but also maximized his performance at all stages of the UPSC CSE.

TOPPERS' TALK



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**Yaksh Chaudhary**

**6**  
RANK  
2021

Yaksh Chaudhary, a resident of Amroha, Uttar Pradesh, through unwavering determination secured an All India Rank 6 in the prestigious exam on his third attempt in 2021. With his passion for Sociology, Yaksh opted for it as his optional subject and devised a winning strategy for his preparation.

Yaksh's **exceptional expertise in answer writing** and adeptness in attempting question papers during the mains exam provided him an edge. Moreover, his skill in crafting **well-structured diagrams** for General Studies, Ethics, and Sociology further enriched the quality and visual appeal of his responses. Yaksh's achievements serve as an inspiration to aspiring candidates nationwide, exemplifying the significance of perseverance, dedication, and strategic planning.

TOPPERS' TALK



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# UPSC CSE TOPPERS 2020



**Shubham  
Kumar**

**1**  
RANK  
2020

Shubham Kumar, hailing from Katihar District in Bihar, completed his graduation in Civil Engineering from IIT Bombay. He achieved the remarkable feat of securing All India Rank 1 in the UPSC examination of 2020 in his third attempt.

His success can be attributed to his **unique approach and meticulous preparation**. Shubham emphasized the importance of **regular mock tests** for prelims and carefully analyzing previous years' UPSC prelims questions.

Shubham was a student of the **VisionIAS Foundation Course**.

He also **utilized topper's copies to enhance his skills in ethics answer writing** and emphasized the **use of diagrams and graphs** in GS papers.

TOPPERS' TALK



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**Jagrati  
Awasthi**

**2**  
RANK  
2020

Jagrati Awasthi, from Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, completed her graduation in Electrical Engineering from NIT Bhopal. She gained two years of valuable work experience at BHEL.

With **Sociology** as her optional subject, she achieved an outstanding All India Rank of 2 in the UPSC examination of 2020.

She has emphasized the **importance of a well-structured daily routine** and shared a **detailed booklist** and recommended sources. Jagrati stressed the significance of thorough reading and utilizing previous years' questions to grasp the exam's demands.

Along with refined **note-making techniques**, she has provided insights on determining the optimal number of questions to attempt in the prelims and leveraging previous year's question papers for **Ethics case studies** preparation.

TOPPERS' TALK



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**Praveen  
Kumar**

**7**  
RANK  
2020

Praveen Kumar, achieved an impressive All India Rank 07 in the UPSC Civil Services Examination 2020. Hailing from Jammui, Bihar, Praveen holds a degree in Civil Engineering from IIT Kanpur.

His remarkable journey includes clearing the GATE examination with an AIR 5 and securing AIR 3 in the Indian Engineering Services (IES) exam, all while working for the Indian Railway Service.

Praveen's toppers talk provides invaluable insights, covering motivations for pursuing the IAS, **effective booklists and sources for exam preparation**, **strategies for newspaper reading and content extraction**, **note-making techniques** for mains, and **utilizing flow charts and diagrams** in answers.

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**Satyam  
Gandhi**

**10**  
RANK  
2020

Satyam Gandhi, an exceptional achiever, secured an All India Rank 10 in the UPSC Civil Services Examination 2020. Hailing from Bihar, Satyam graduated in Political Sciences (H) from Dayal Singh College, University of Delhi.

With **Political Science and International Relations** as his optional subject, he cleared the exam on his first attempt, displaying remarkable determination.

In addition, Satyam achieved an impressive AIR 242 in the NDA Exam. His toppers talk offers invaluable insights into **time management strategies** for a first attempt success, the **significance of flowcharts and diagrams** in mains answers, **effective essay structuring**, and his experience in obtaining a remarkable 201 marks in the interview.

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